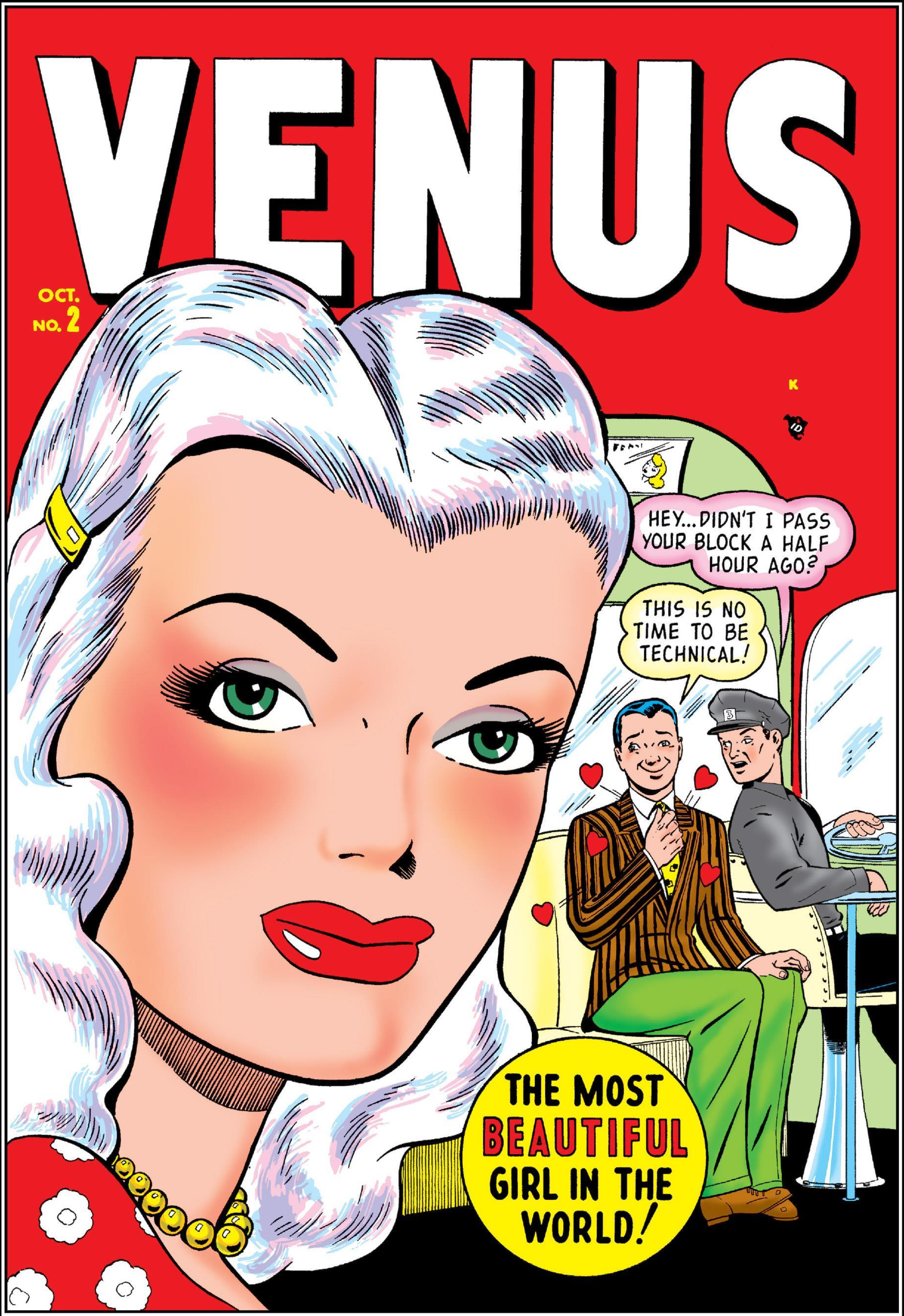
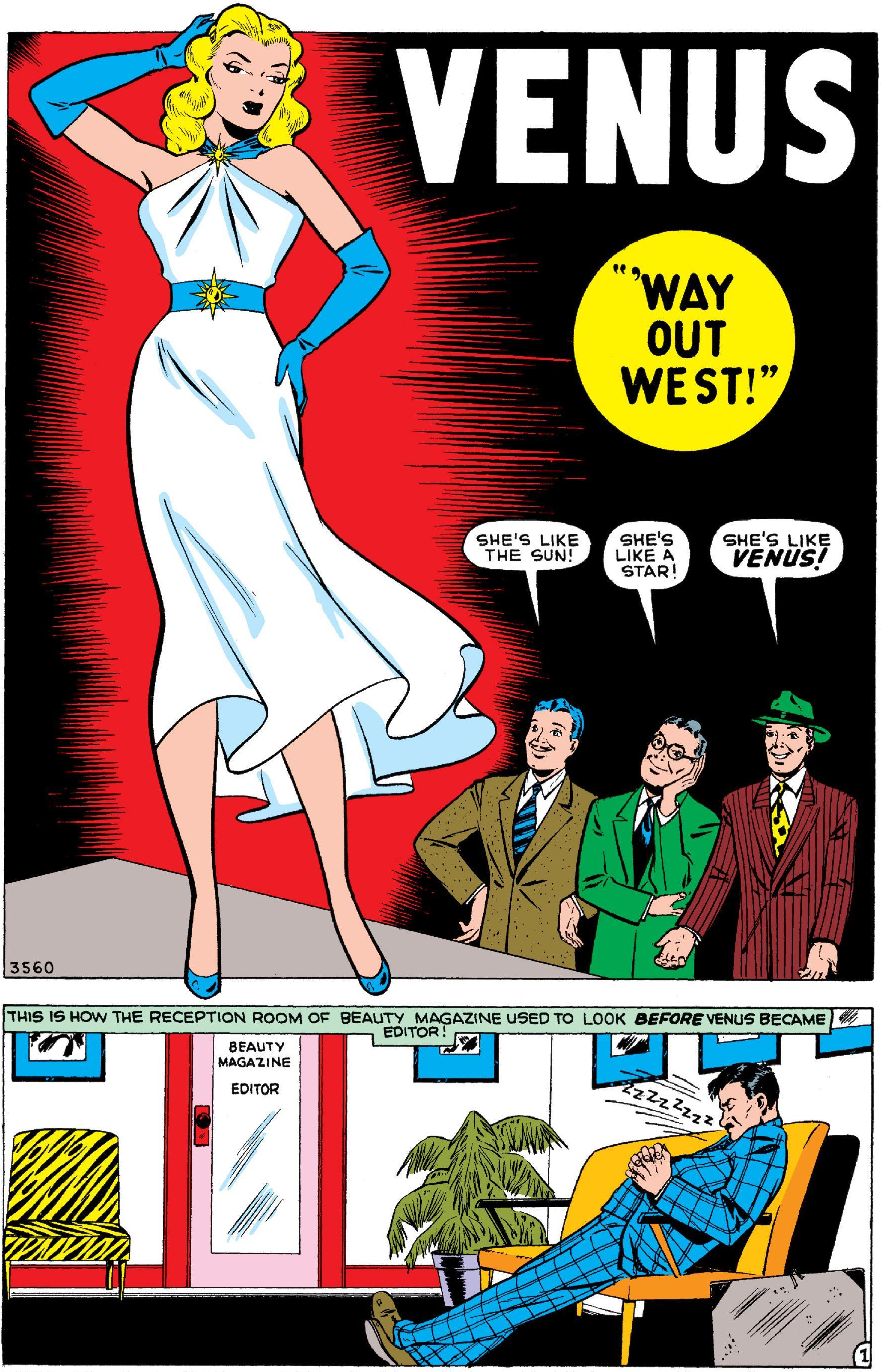
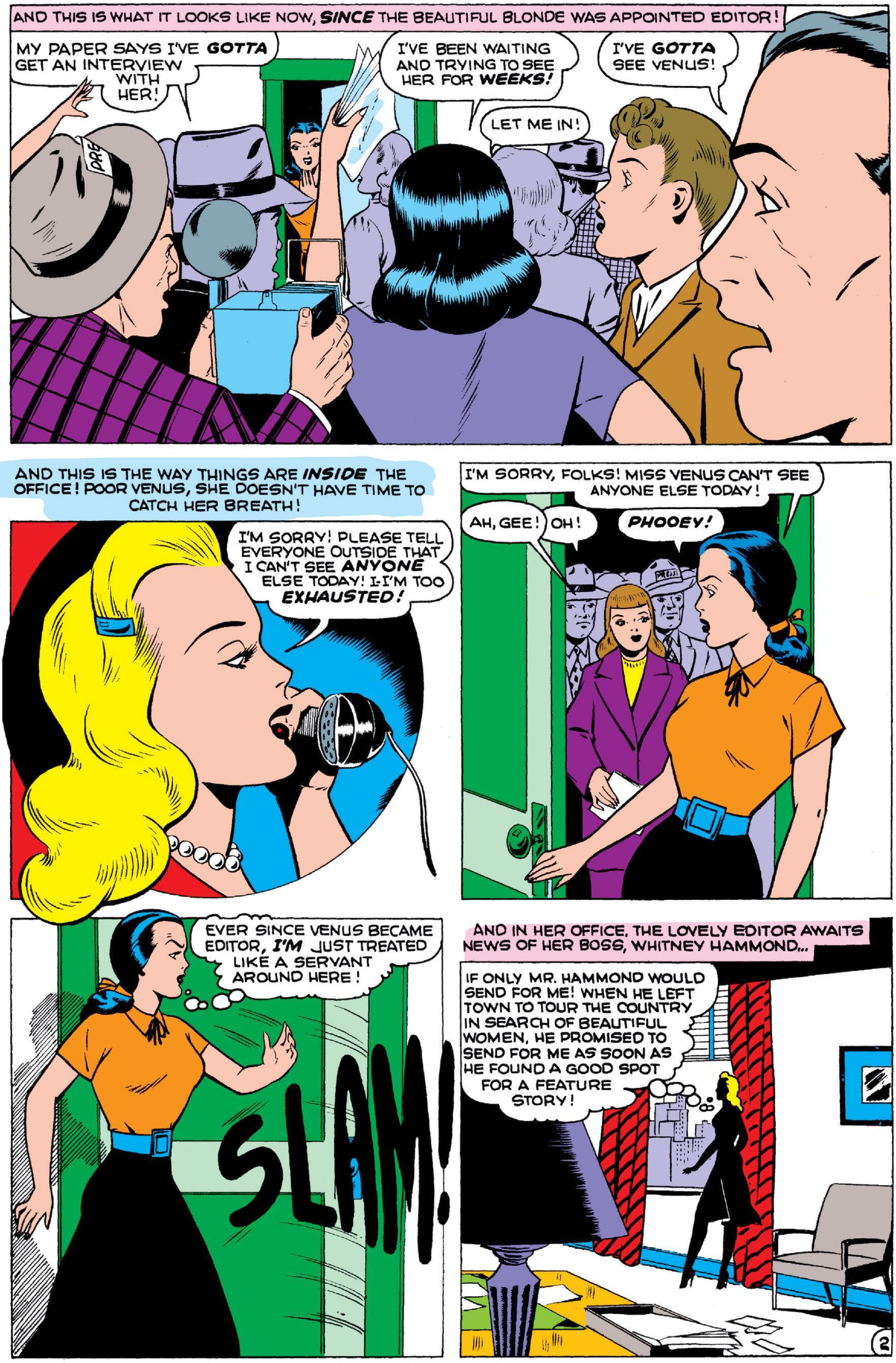
VENUS

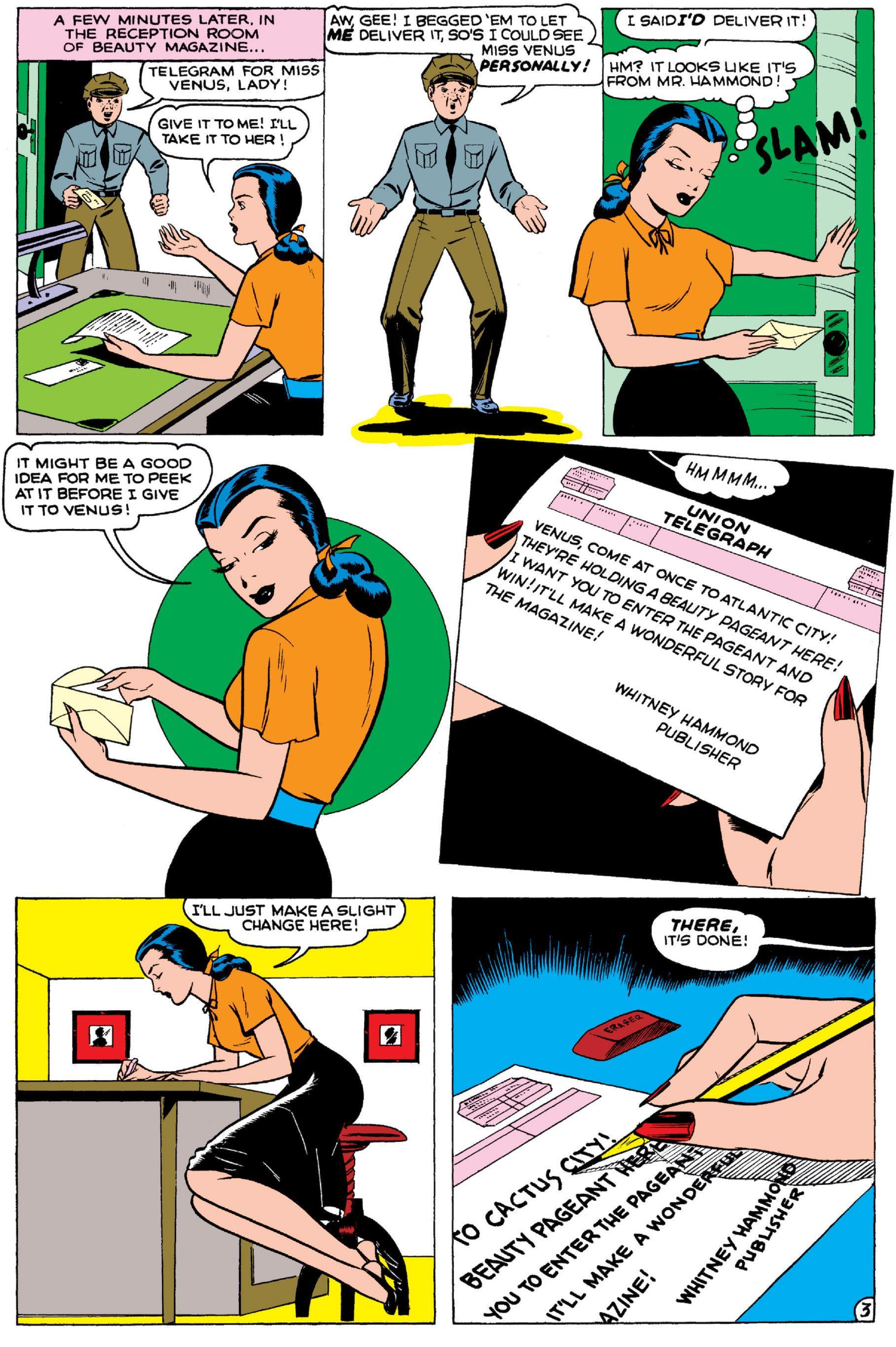
OCT.
NO. 2

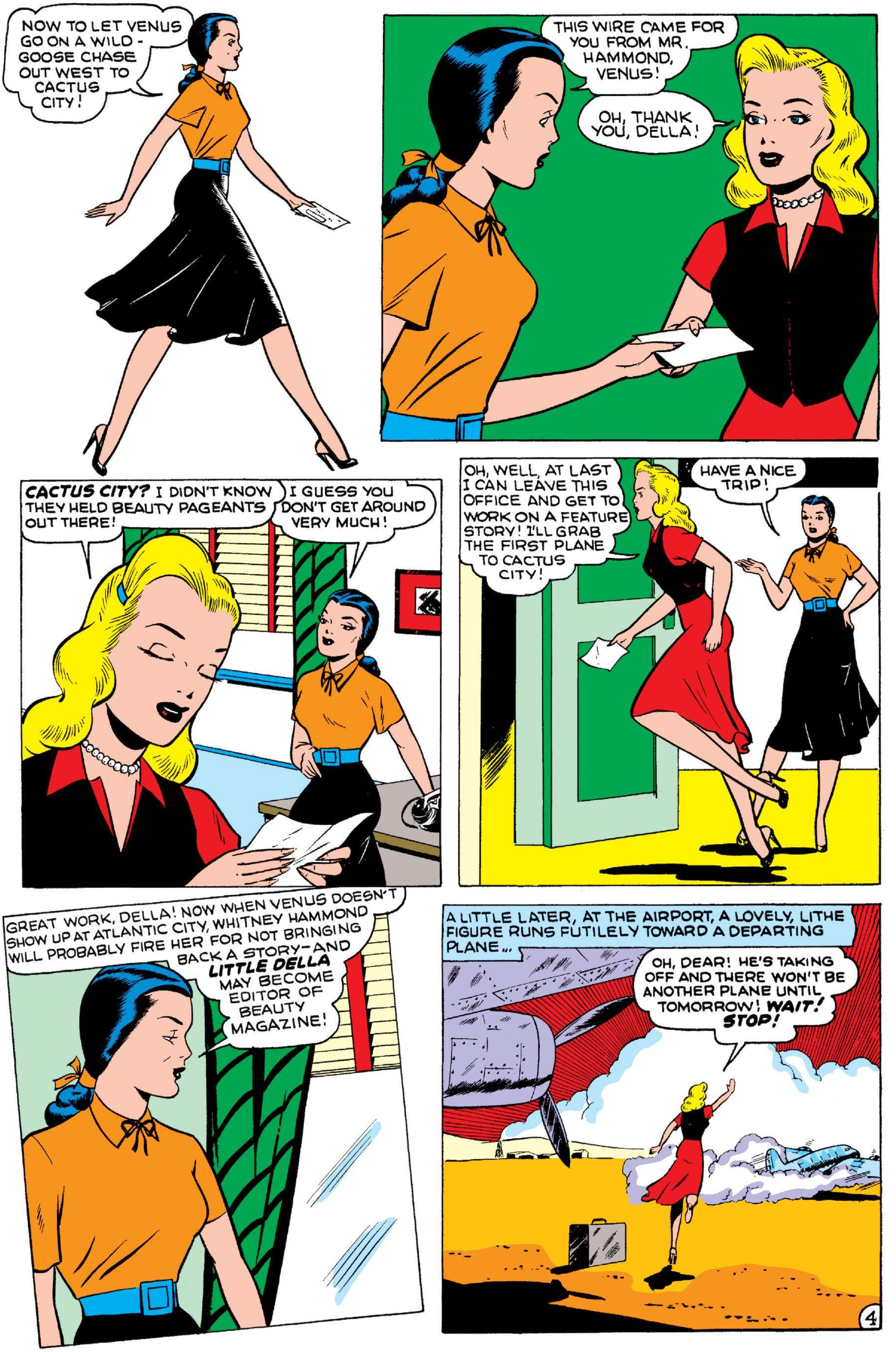

HEY...DIDN'T I PASS YOUR BLOCK A HALF HOUR AGO?
THIS IS NO TIME TO BE TECHNICAL!
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD!

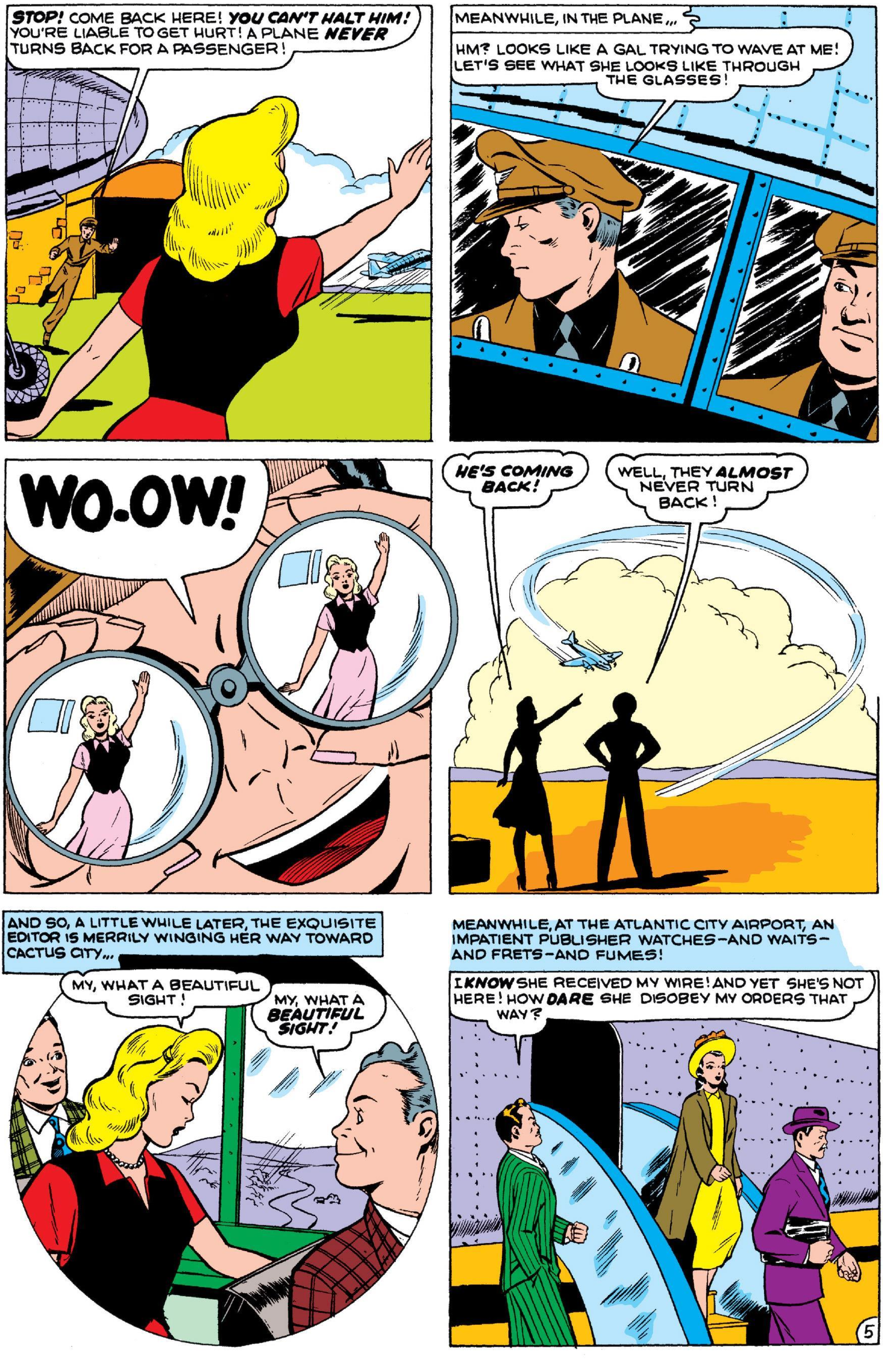

VENUS
"'WAY OUT WEST!"
SHE'S LIKE THE SUN!
SHE'S LIKE A STAR!
SHE'S LIKE *VENUS!*
3560
THIS IS HOW THE RECEPTION ROOM OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE USED TO LOOK *BEFORE* VENUS BECAME EDITOR!
BEAUTY MAGAZINE EDITOR
ZZZZZZZZ
1

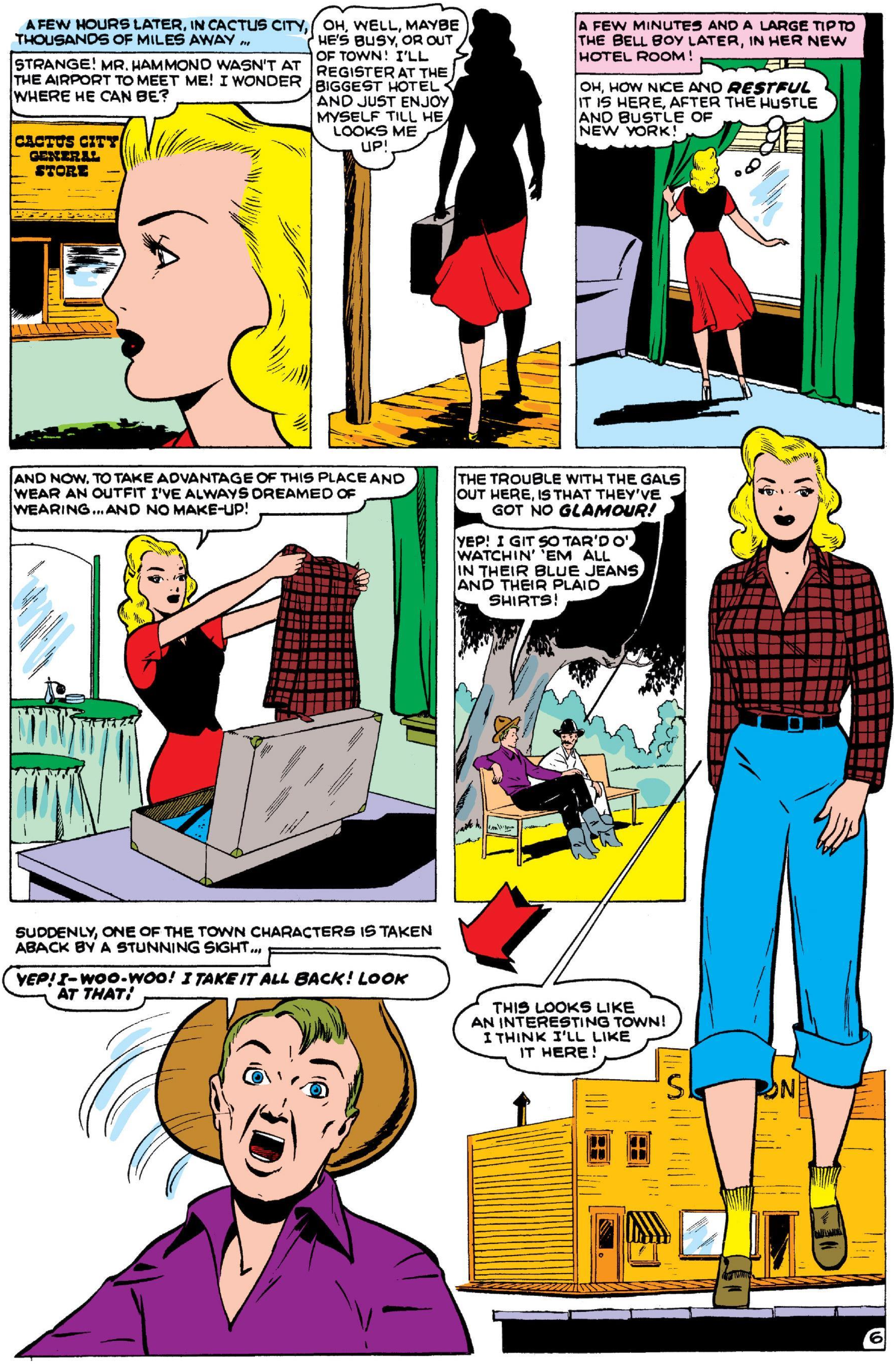
© 2018 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

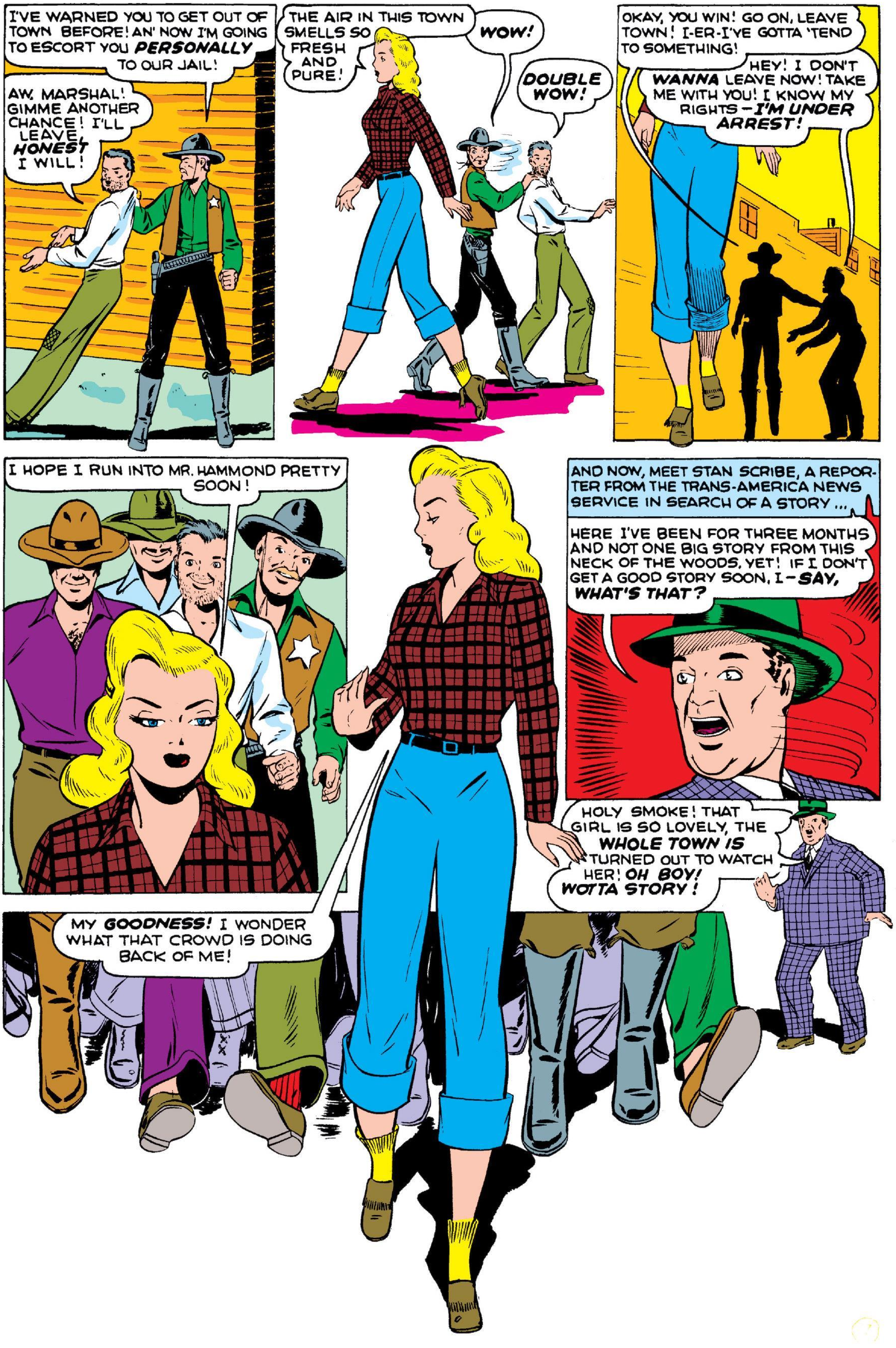

AND THIS IS WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE NOW, SINCE THE BEAUTIFUL BLONDE WAS APPOINTED EDITOR!
MY PAPER SAYS I'VE GOTTA GET AN INTERVIEW WITH HER!
PRE
I'VE BEEN WAITING AND TRYING TO SEE HER FOR WEEKS!
LET ME IN!
I'VE GOTTA SEE VENUS!
AND THIS IS THE WAY THINGS ARE INSIDE THE OFFICE! POOR VENUS, SHE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO CATCH HER BREATH!
I'M SORRY! PLEASE TELL EVERYONE OUTSIDE THAT I CAN'T SEE ANYONE ELSE TODAY! I-I'M TOO EXHAUSTED!
I'M SORRY, FOLKS! MISS VENUS CAN'T SEE ANYONE ELSE TODAY!
AH, GEE!
OH!
PHOOEY!
PRESS
EVER SINCE VENUS BECAME EDITOR, I'M JUST TREATED LIKE A SERVANT AROUND HERE!
SLAM!
AND IN HER OFFICE, THE LOVELY EDITOR AWAITS NEWS OF HER BOSS, WHITNEY HAMMOND...
IF ONLY MR. HAMMOND WOULD SEND FOR ME! WHEN HE LEFT TOWN TO TOUR THE COUNTRY IN SEARCH OF BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, HE PROMISED TO SEND FOR ME AS SOON AS HE FOUND A GOOD SPOT FOR A FEATURE STORY!

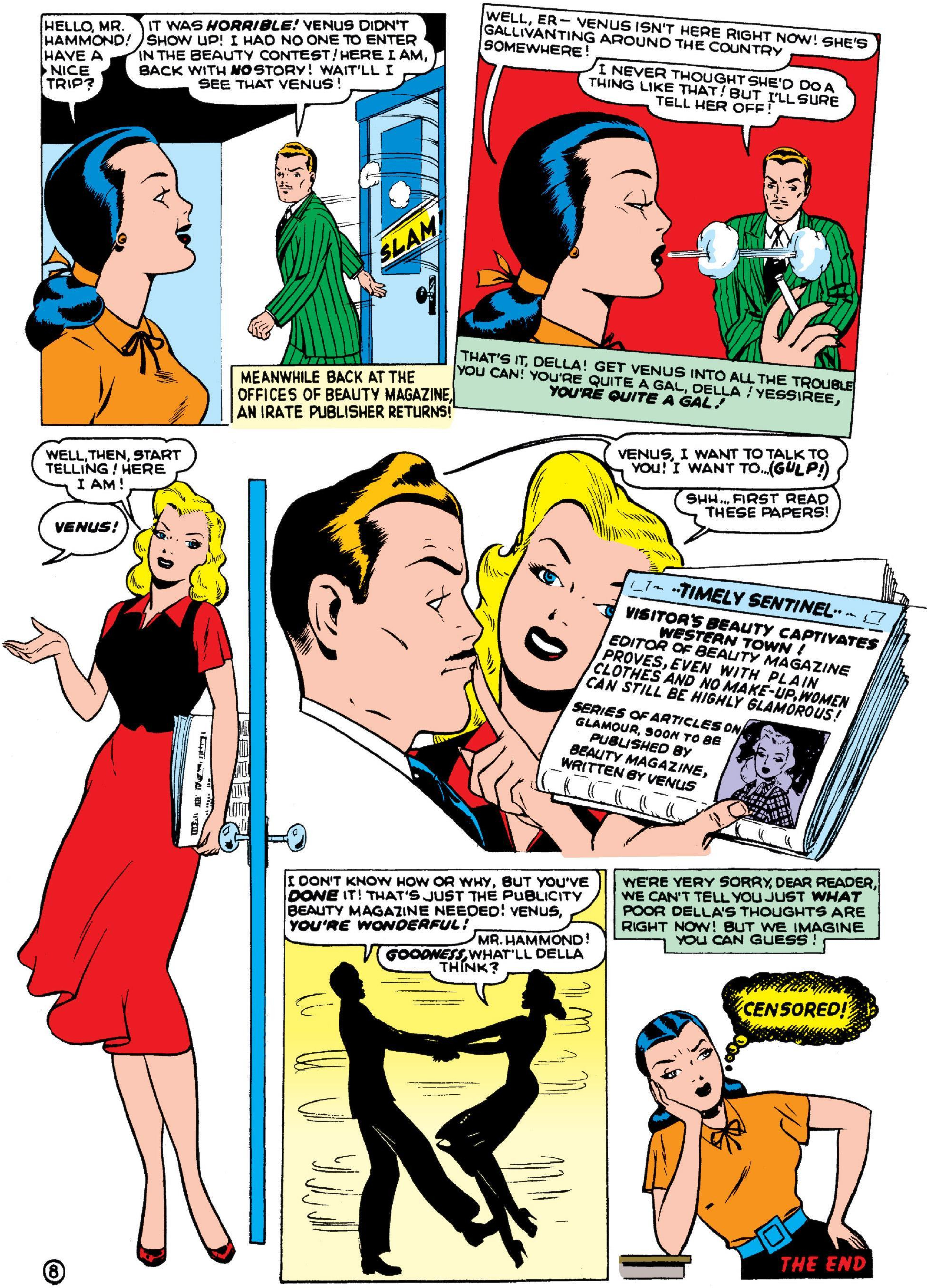

A FEW MINUTES LATER, IN THE RECEPTION ROOM OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE...
TELEGRAM FOR MISS VENUS, LADY!
GIVE IT TO ME! I'LL TAKE IT TO HER!
AW, GEE! I BEGGED 'EM TO LET **ME** DELIVER IT, SO'S I COULD SEE MISS VENUS **PERSONALLY!**
I SAID **I'D** DELIVER IT!
HM? IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S FROM MR. HAMMOND!
SLAM!
IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA FOR ME TO PEEK AT IT BEFORE I GIVE IT TO VENUS!
HMMMM...
UNION TELEGRAPH
VENUS, COME AT ONCE TO ATLANTIC CITY! THEY'RE HOLDING A BEAUTY PAGEANT HERE! I WANT YOU TO ENTER THE PAGEANT AND WIN! IT'LL MAKE A WONDERFUL STORY FOR THE MAGAZINE!
WHITNEY HAMMOND PUBLISHER
I'LL JUST MAKE A SLIGHT CHANGE HERE!
THERE, IT'S DONE!
ERASER
TO CACTUS CITY!
BEAUTY PAGEANT HERE
YOU TO ENTER THE PAGEANT
IT'LL MAKE A WONDERFUL
AZINE!
WHITNEY HAMMOND
PUBLISHER

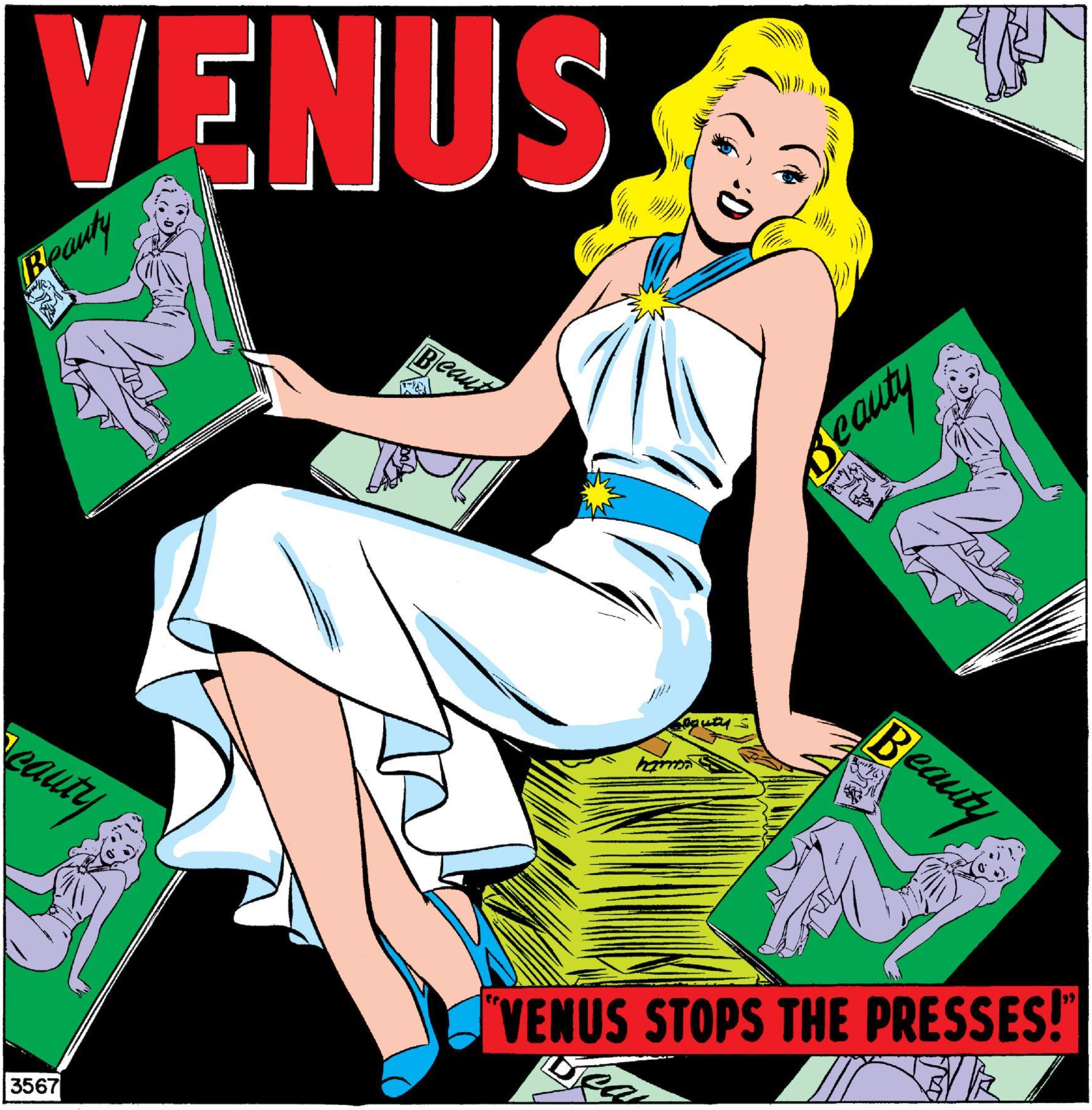

NOW TO LET VENUS GO ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE OUT WEST TO CACTUS CITY!
THIS WIRE CAME FOR YOU FROM MR. HAMMOND, VENUS!
OH, THANK YOU, DELLA!
CACTUS CITY? I DIDN'T KNOW THEY HELD BEAUTY PAGEANTS OUT THERE!
I GUESS YOU DON'T GET AROUND VERY MUCH!
OH, WELL, AT LAST I CAN LEAVE THIS OFFICE AND GET TO WORK ON A FEATURE STORY! I'LL GRAB THE FIRST PLANE TO CACTUS CITY!
HAVE A NICE TRIP!
GREAT WORK, DELLA! NOW WHEN VENUS DOESN'T SHOW UP AT ATLANTIC CITY, WHITNEY HAMMOND WILL PROBABLY FIRE HER FOR NOT BRINGING BACK A STORY–AND LITTLE DELLA MAY BECOME EDITOR OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE!
A LITTLE LATER, AT THE AIRPORT, A LOVELY, LITHE FIGURE RUNS FUTILELY TOWARD A DEPARTING PLANE...
OH, DEAR! HE'S TAKING OFF AND THERE WON'T BE ANOTHER PLANE UNTIL TOMORROW! WAIT! STOP!

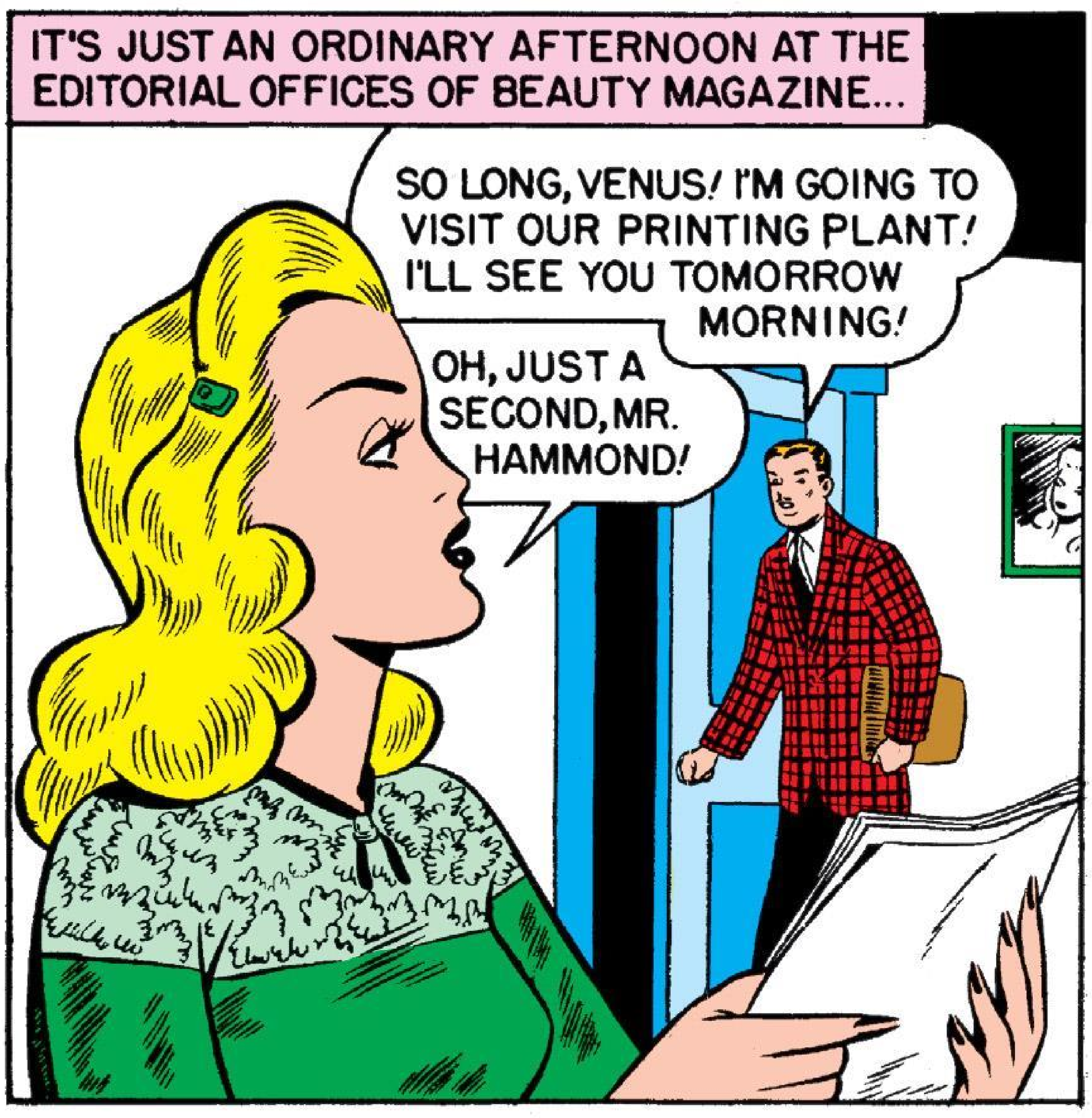

STOP! COME BACK HERE! YOU CAN'T HALT HIM! YOU'RE LIABLE TO GET HURT! A PLANE NEVER TURNS BACK FOR A PASSENGER!
MEANWHILE, IN THE PLANE...
HM? LOOKS LIKE A GAL TRYING TO WAVE AT ME! LET'S SEE WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE THROUGH THE GLASSES!
WO-OW!
HE'S COMING BACK!
WELL, THEY ALMOST NEVER TURN BACK!
AND SO, A LITTLE WHILE LATER, THE EXQUISITE EDITOR IS MERRILY WINGING HER WAY TOWARD CACTUS CITY...
MY, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT!
MY, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT!
MEANWHILE, AT THE ATLANTIC CITY AIRPORT, AN IMPATIENT PUBLISHER WATCHES—AND WAITS—AND FRETS—AND FUMES!
I KNOW SHE RECEIVED MY WIRE! AND YET SHE'S NOT HERE! HOW DARE SHE DISOBEY MY ORDERS THAT WAY?

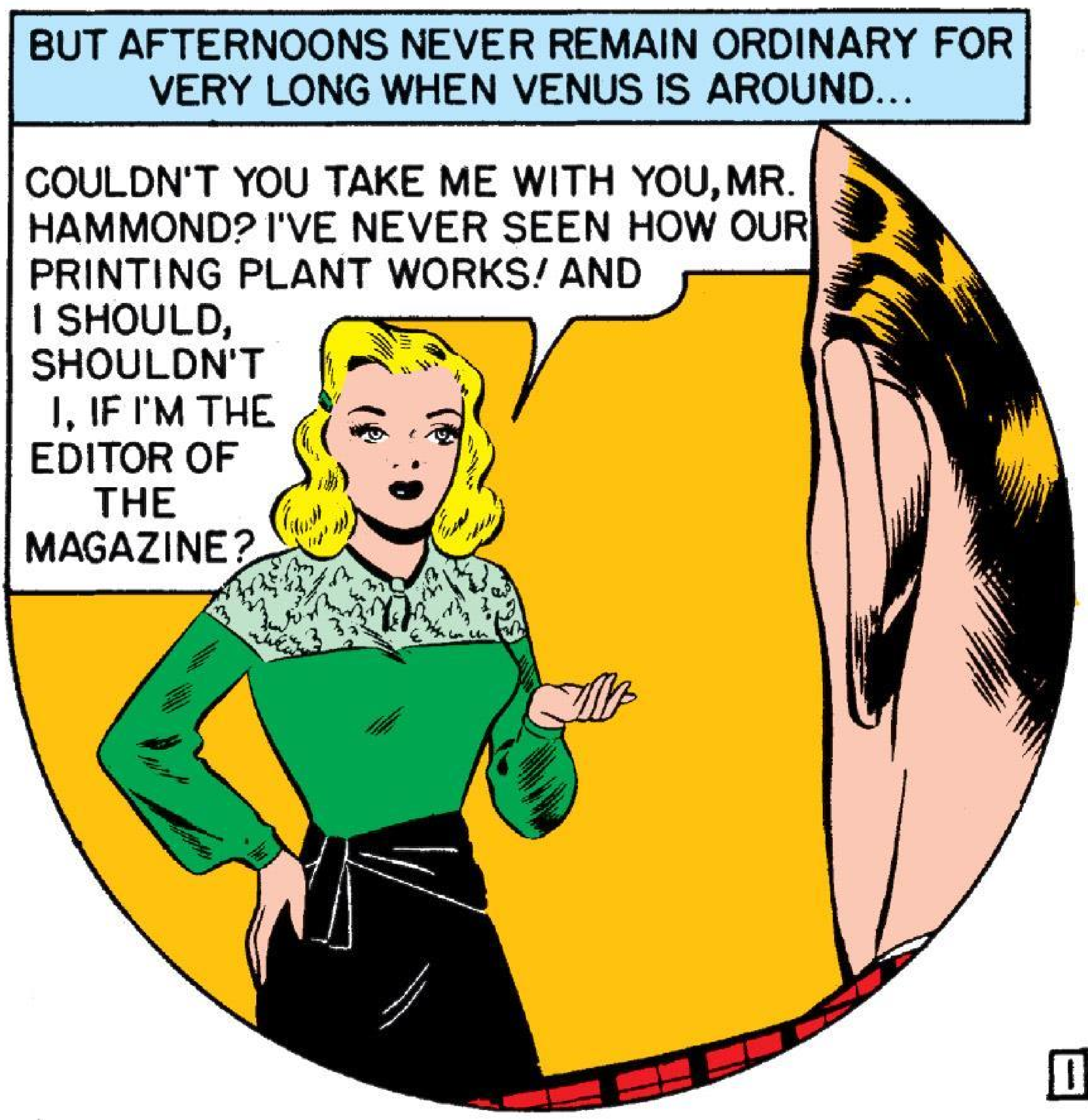

A FEW HOURS LATER, IN CACTUS CITY, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY ...
STRANGE! MR. HAMMOND WASN'T AT THE AIRPORT TO MEET ME! I WONDER WHERE HE CAN BE?
CACTUS CITY GENERAL STORE
OH, WELL, MAYBE HE'S BUSY, OR OUT OF TOWN! I'LL REGISTER AT THE BIGGEST HOTEL AND JUST ENJOY MYSELF TILL HE LOOKS ME UP!
A FEW MINUTES AND A LARGE TIP TO THE BELL BOY LATER, IN HER NEW HOTEL ROOM!
OH, HOW NICE AND RESTFUL IT IS HERE, AFTER THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF NEW YORK!
AND NOW, TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS PLACE AND WEAR AN OUTFIT I'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF WEARING ... AND NO MAKE-UP!
THE TROUBLE WITH THE GALS OUT HERE, IS THAT THEY'VE GOT NO GLAMOUR!
YEP! I GIT SO TAR'D O' WATCHIN' 'EM ALL IN THEIR BLUE JEANS AND THEIR PLAID SHIRTS!
SUDDENLY, ONE OF THE TOWN CHARACTERS IS TAKEN ABACK BY A STUNNING SIGHT ...
YEP! I-WOO-WOO! I TAKE IT ALL BACK! LOOK AT THAT!
THIS LOOKS LIKE AN INTERESTING TOWN! I THINK I'LL LIKE IT HERE!
S ON

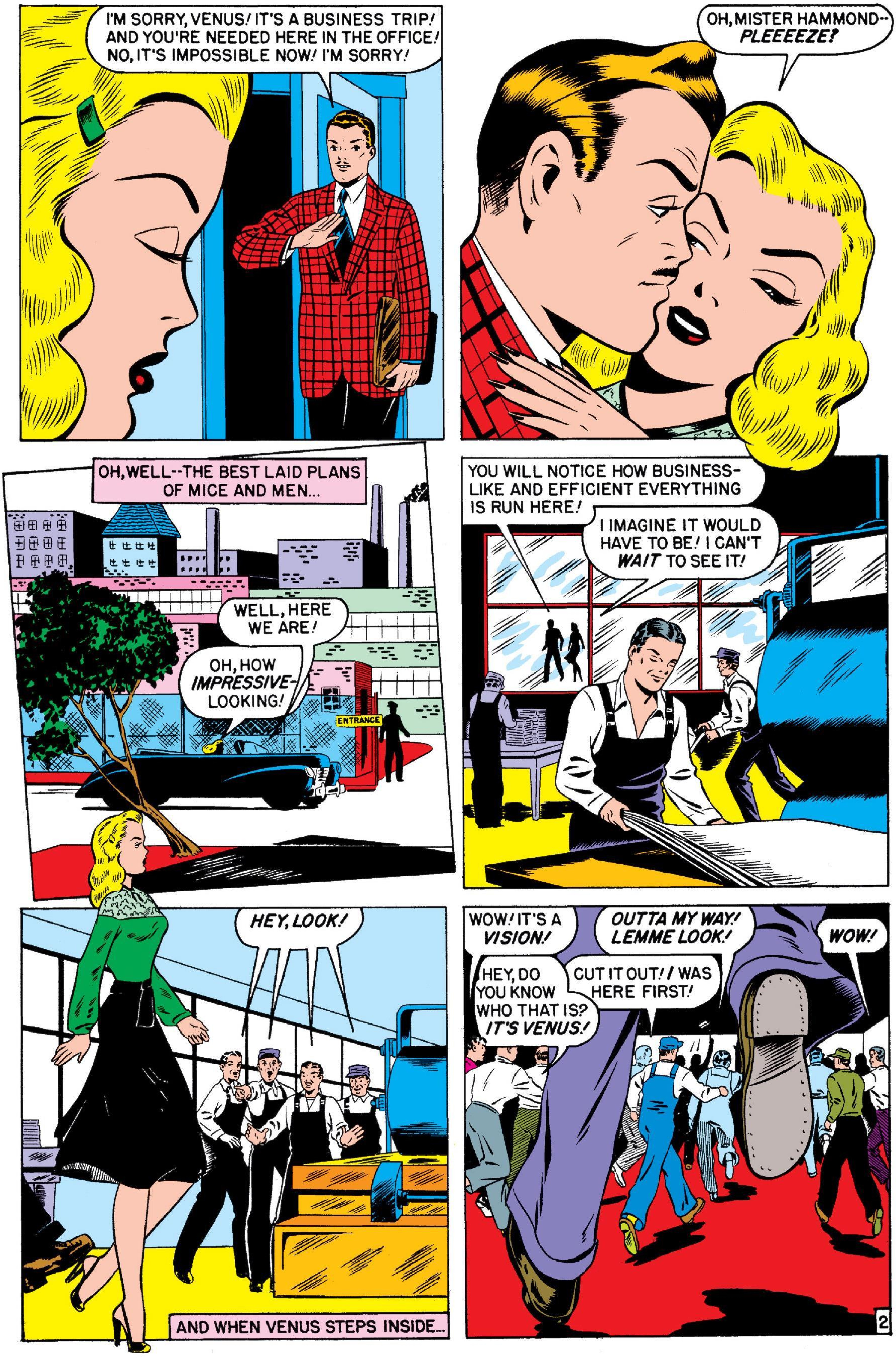

I'VE WARNED YOU TO GET OUT OF TOWN BEFORE! AN' NOW I'M GOING TO ESCORT YOU **PERSONALLY** TO OUR JAIL!
AW, MARSHAL! GIMME ANOTHER CHANCE! I'LL LEAVE, **HONEST** I WILL!
THE AIR IN THIS TOWN SMELLS SO FRESH AND PURE!
WOW!
DOUBLE WOW!
OKAY, YOU WIN! GO ON, LEAVE TOWN! I-ER-I'VE GOTTA 'TEND TO SOMETHING!
HEY! I DON'T **WANNA** LEAVE NOW! TAKE ME WITH YOU! I KNOW MY RIGHTS—**I'M UNDER ARREST!**
I HOPE I RUN INTO MR. HAMMOND PRETTY SOON!
AND NOW, MEET STAN SCRIBE, A REPORTER FROM THE TRANS-AMERICA NEWS SERVICE IN SEARCH OF A STORY ...
HERE I'VE BEEN FOR THREE MONTHS AND NOT ONE BIG STORY FROM THIS NECK OF THE WOODS, YET! IF I DON'T GET A GOOD STORY SOON, I—**SAY, WHAT'S THAT?**
HOLY SMOKE! THAT GIRL IS SO LOVELY, THE **WHOLE TOWN IS** TURNED OUT TO WATCH HER! **OH BOY! WOTTA STORY!**
MY **GOODNESS!** I WONDER WHAT THAT CROWD IS DOING BACK OF ME!

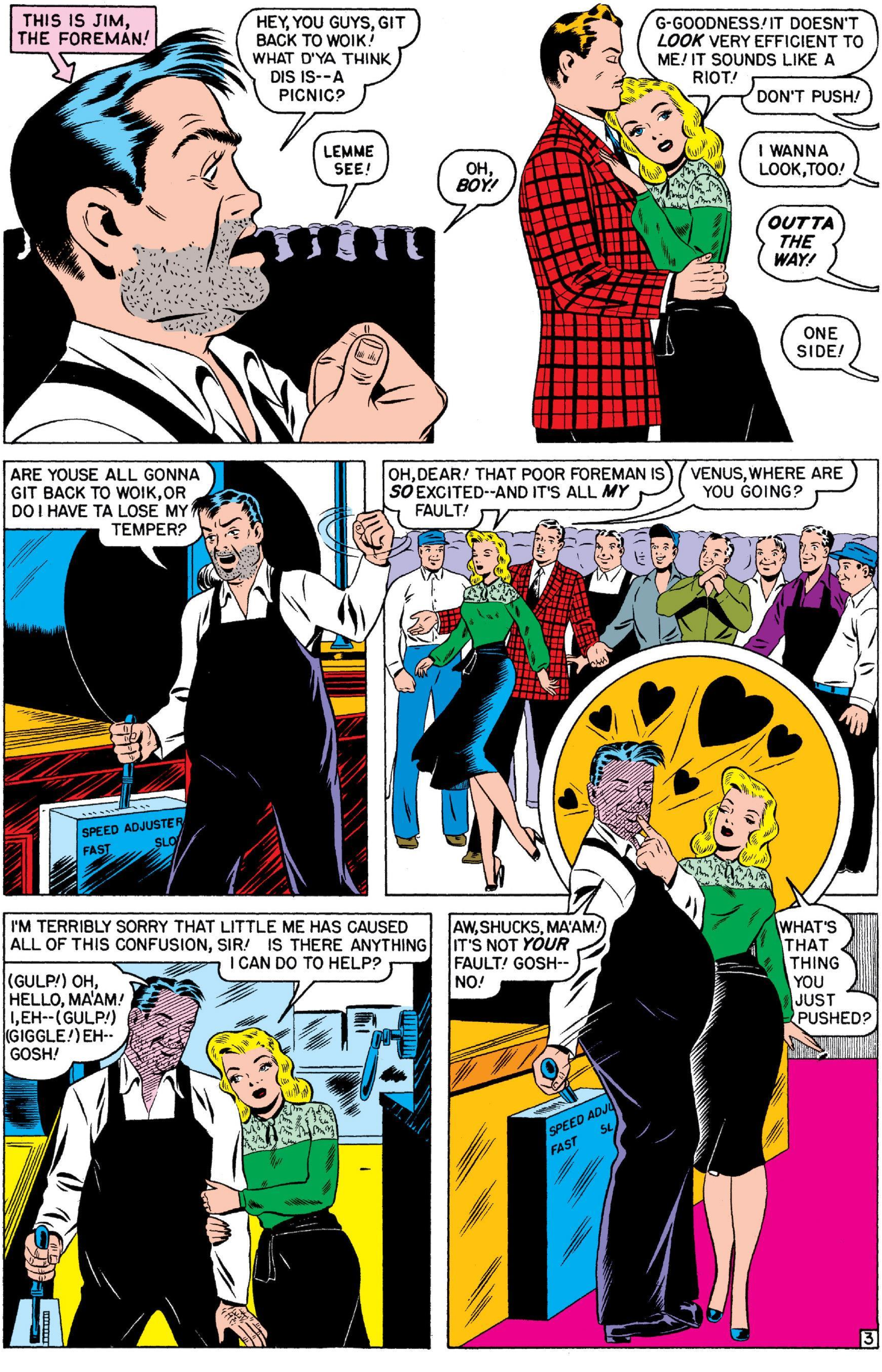

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE OFFICES OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE, AN IRATE PUBLISHER RETURNS!
HELLO, MR. HAMMOND! HAVE A NICE TRIP?
IT WAS **HORRIBLE!** VENUS DIDN'T SHOW UP! I HAD NO ONE TO ENTER IN THE BEAUTY CONTEST! HERE I AM, BACK WITH **NO** STORY! WAIT'LL I SEE THAT VENUS!
SLAM!
WELL, ER— VENUS ISN'T HERE RIGHT NOW! SHE'S GALLIVANTING AROUND THE COUNTRY SOMEWHERE!
I NEVER THOUGHT SHE'D DO A THING LIKE THAT! BUT I'LL SURE TELL HER OFF!
THAT'S IT, DELLA! GET VENUS INTO ALL THE TROUBLE YOU CAN! YOU'RE QUITE A GAL, DELLA! YESSIREE, ***YOU'RE QUITE A GAL!***
WELL, THEN, START TELLING! HERE I AM!
VENUS!
VENUS, I WANT TO TALK TO YOU! I WANT TO...**(GULP!)**
SHH... FIRST READ THESE PAPERS!
TIMELY SENTINEL
VISITOR'S BEAUTY CAPTIVATES WESTERN TOWN!
EDITOR OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE PROVES, EVEN WITH PLAIN CLOTHES AND NO MAKE-UP, WOMEN CAN STILL BE HIGHLY GLAMOROUS!
SERIES OF ARTICLES ON GLAMOUR, SOON TO BE PUBLISHED BY BEAUTY MAGAZINE, WRITTEN BY VENUS
I DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHY, BUT YOU'VE ***DONE*** IT! THAT'S JUST THE PUBLICITY BEAUTY MAGAZINE NEEDED! VENUS, ***YOU'RE WONDERFUL!***
MR. HAMMOND! ***GOODNESS,*** WHAT'LL DELLA THINK?
WE'RE VERY SORRY, DEAR READER, WE CAN'T TELL YOU JUST **WHAT** POOR DELLA'S THOUGHTS ARE RIGHT NOW! BUT WE IMAGINE YOU CAN GUESS!
CENSORED!
THE END

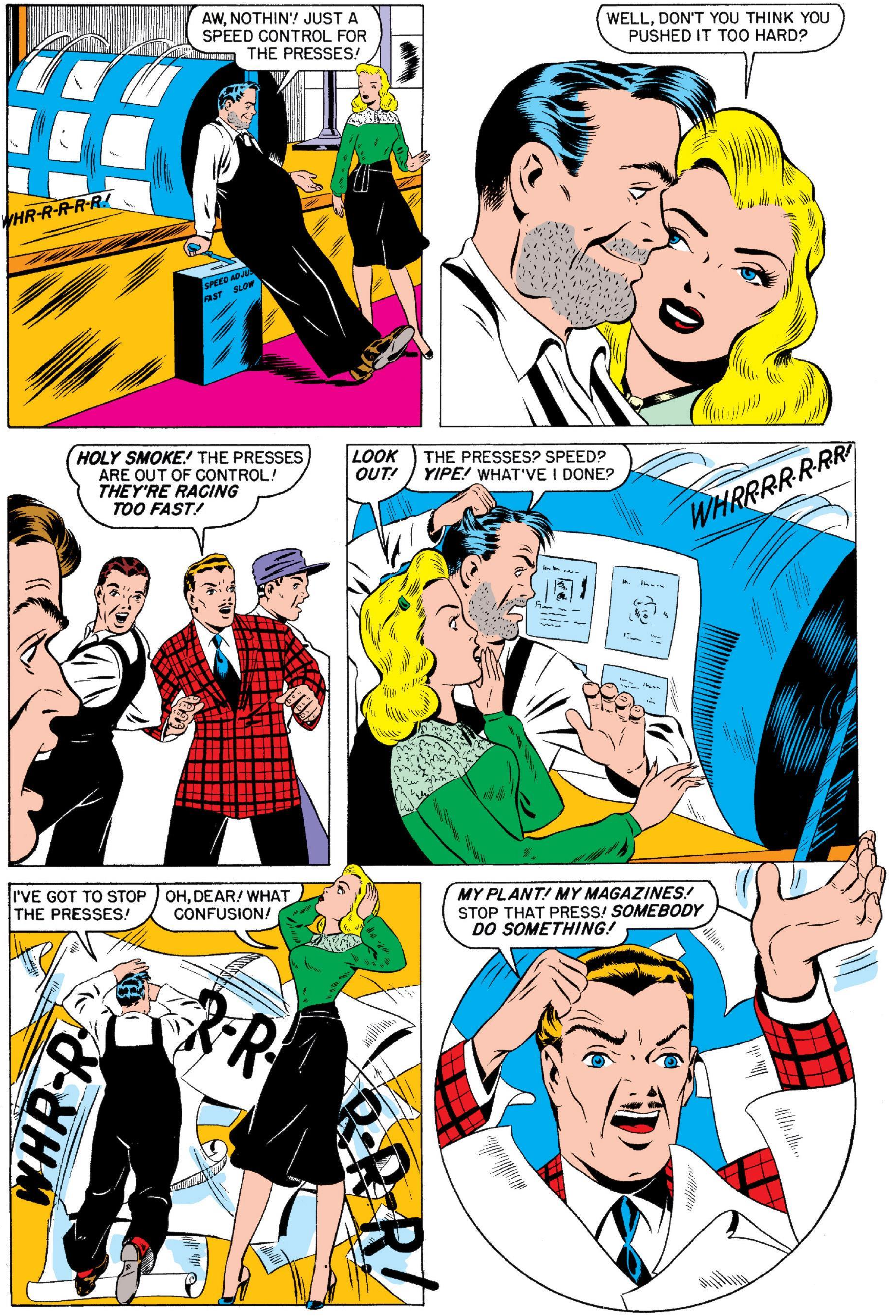

VENUS
Beauty
"VENUS STOPS THE PRESSES!"
3567

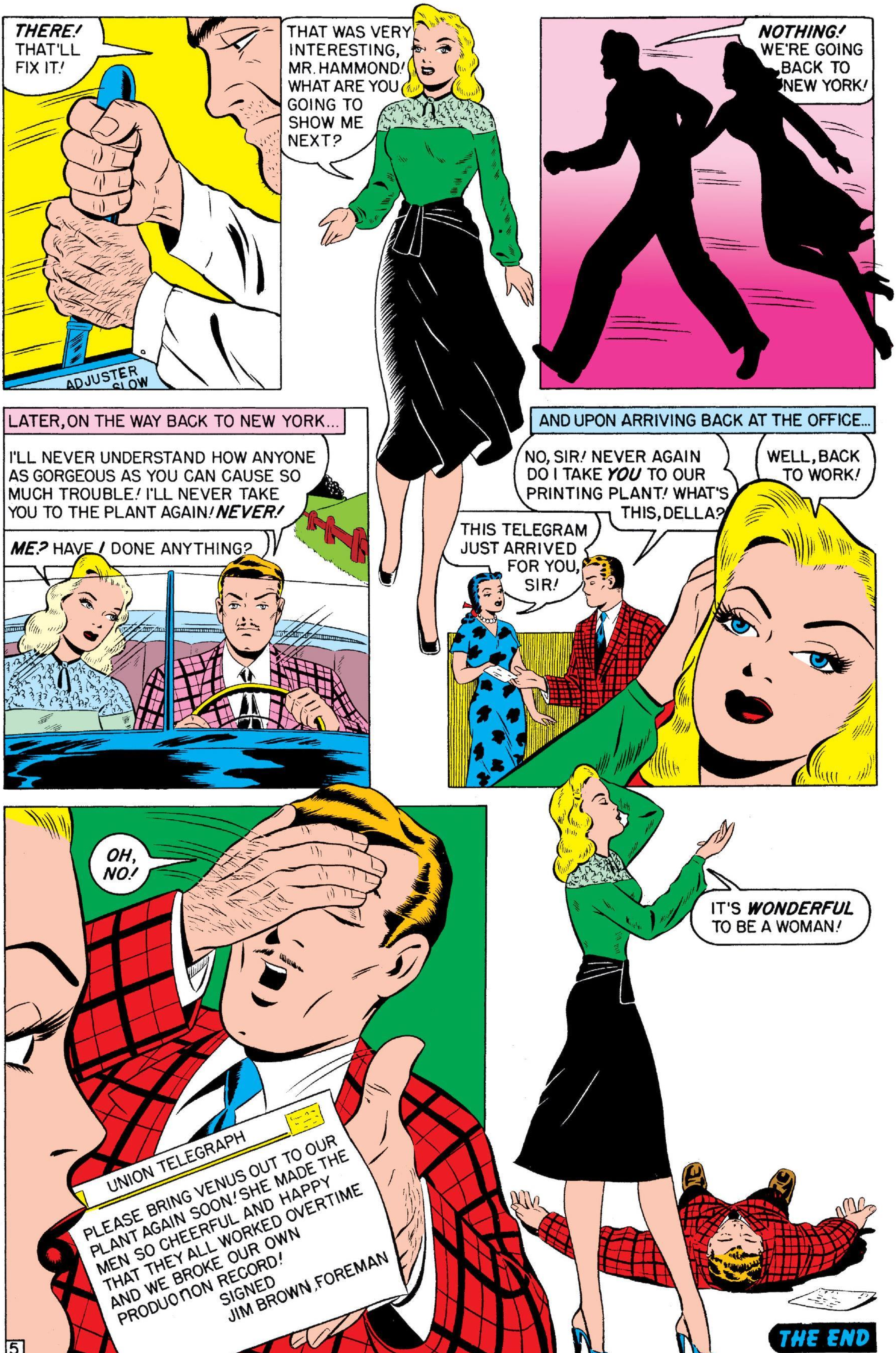

IT'S JUST AN ORDINARY AFTERNOON AT THE EDITORIAL OFFICES OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE...
SO LONG, VENUS! I'M GOING TO VISIT OUR PRINTING PLANT! I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW MORNING!
OH, JUST A SECOND, MR. HAMMOND!

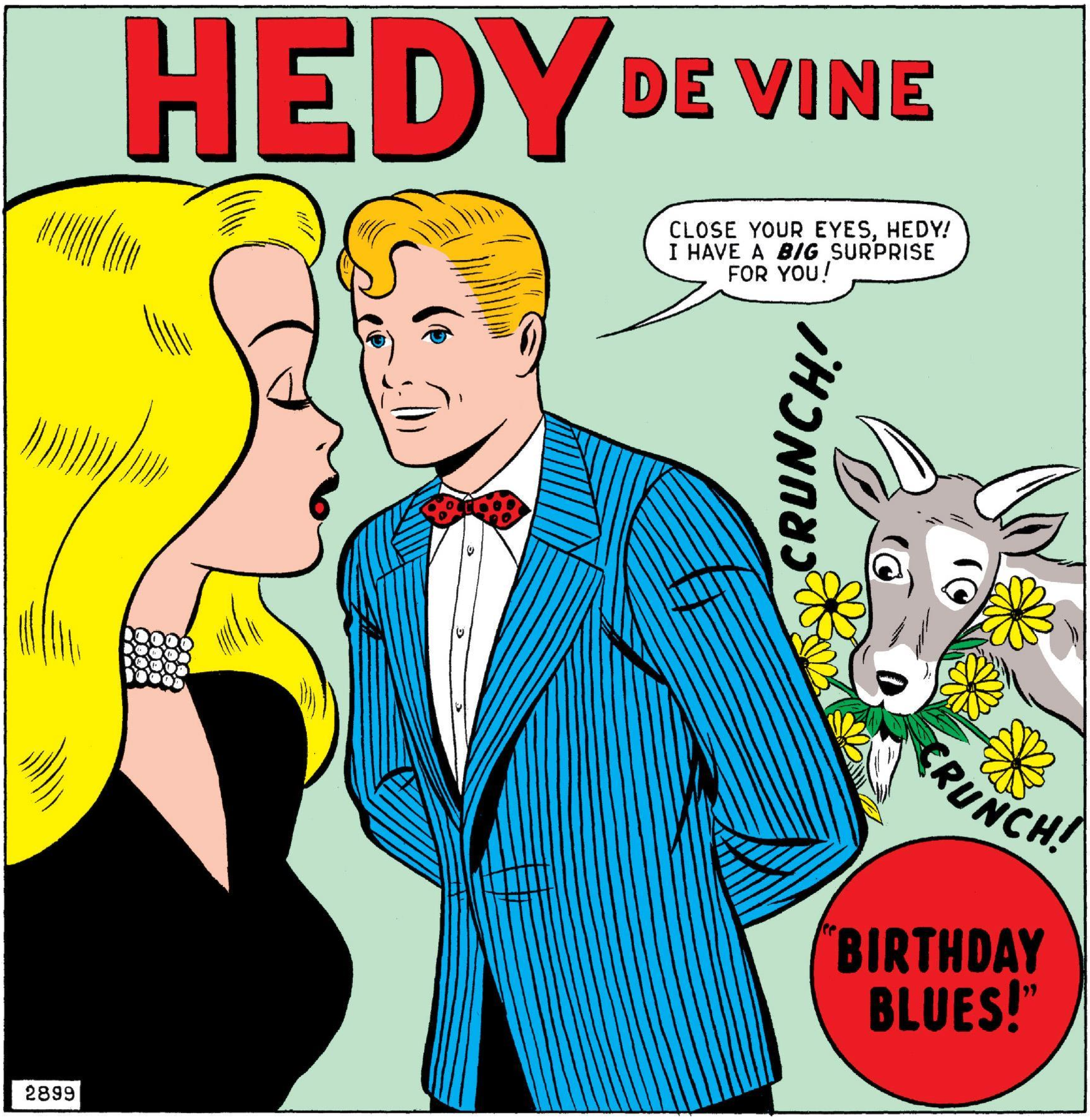

BUT AFTERNOONS NEVER REMAIN ORDINARY FOR VERY LONG WHEN VENUS IS AROUND...
COULDN'T YOU TAKE ME WITH YOU, MR. HAMMOND? I'VE NEVER SEEN HOW OUR PRINTING PLANT WORKS! AND I SHOULD, SHOULDN'T I, IF I'M THE EDITOR OF THE MAGAZINE?
1

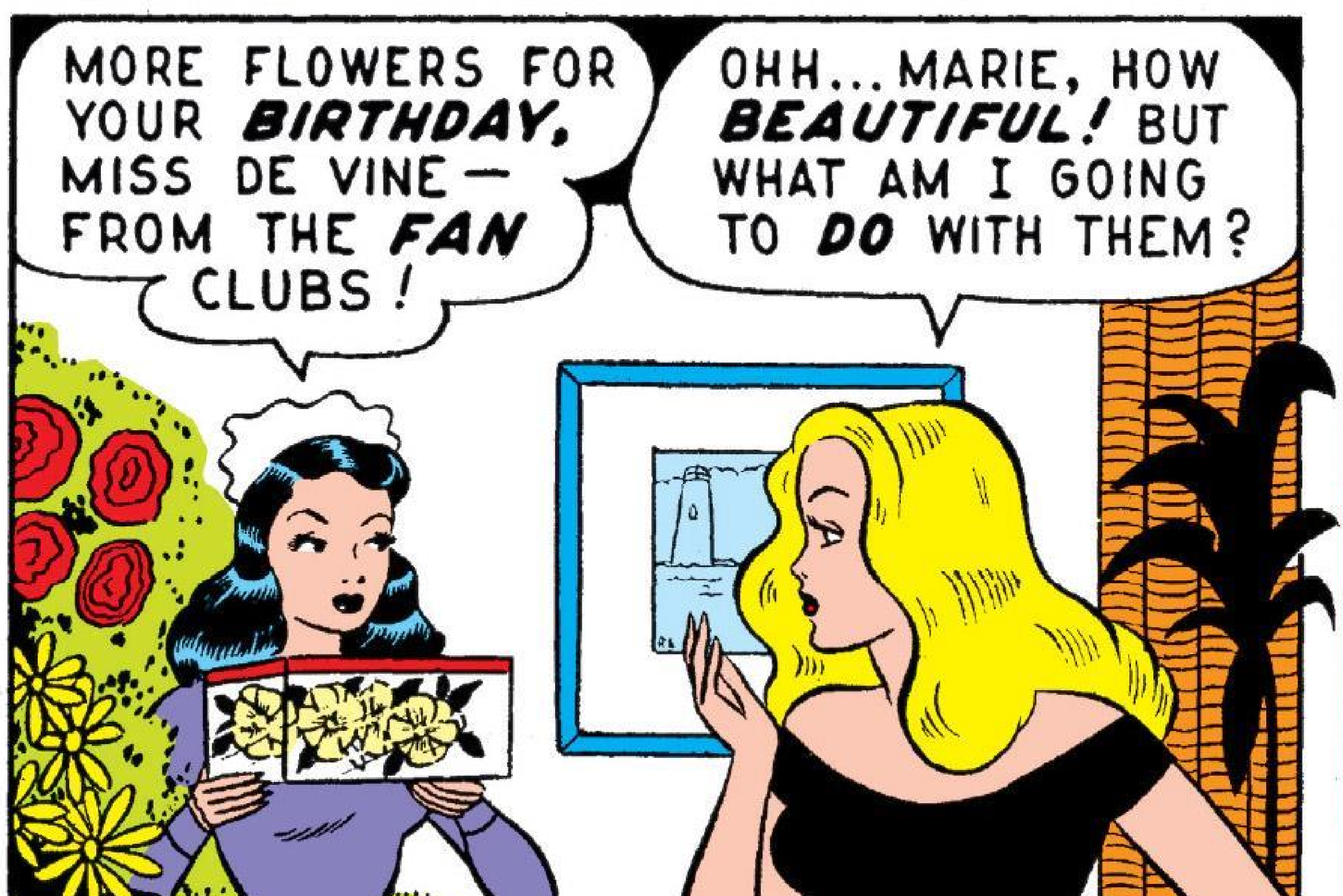

I'M SORRY, VENUS! IT'S A BUSINESS TRIP! AND YOU'RE NEEDED HERE IN THE OFFICE! NO, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOW! I'M SORRY!
OH, MISTER HAMMOND-- *PLEEEEZE?*
OH, WELL--THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MICE AND MEN...
WELL, HERE WE ARE!
OH, HOW *IMPRESSIVE*-LOOKING!
ENTRANCE
YOU WILL NOTICE HOW BUSINESS-LIKE AND EFFICIENT EVERYTHING IS RUN HERE!
I IMAGINE IT WOULD HAVE TO BE! I CAN'T *WAIT* TO SEE IT!
HEY, LOOK!
AND WHEN VENUS STEPS INSIDE...
WOW! IT'S A *VISION!*
OUTTA MY WAY! LEMME LOOK!
WOW!
HEY, DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS? *IT'S VENUS!*
CUT IT OUT! I WAS HERE FIRST!

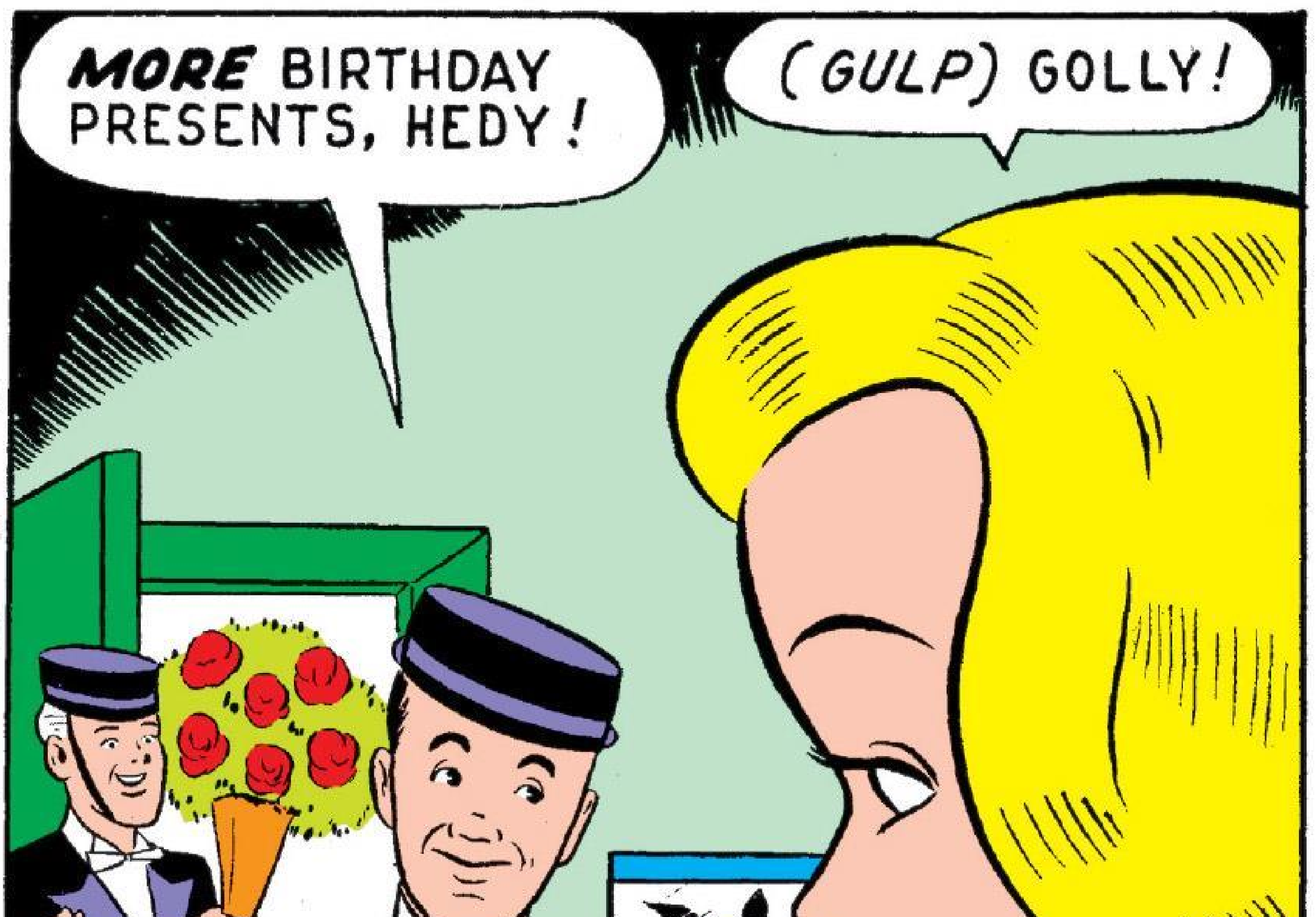

THIS IS JIM, THE FOREMAN!
HEY, YOU GUYS, GIT BACK TO WOIK! WHAT D'YA THINK DIS IS--A PICNIC?
LEMME SEE!
OH, *BOY!*
G-GOODNESS! IT DOESN'T *LOOK* VERY EFFICIENT TO ME! IT SOUNDS LIKE A RIOT!
DON'T PUSH!
I WANNA LOOK, TOO!
OUTTA THE WAY!
ONE SIDE!
ARE YOUSE ALL GONNA GIT BACK TO WOIK, OR DO I HAVE TA LOSE MY TEMPER?
SPEED ADJUSTER
FAST
SLO
OH, DEAR! THAT POOR FOREMAN IS *SO* EXCITED--AND IT'S ALL *MY* FAULT!
VENUS, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY THAT LITTLE ME HAS CAUSED ALL OF THIS CONFUSION, SIR! IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP?
(GULP!) OH, HELLO, MA'AM! I, EH--(GULP!) (GIGGLE!) EH-- GOSH!
AW, SHUCKS, MA'AM! IT'S NOT *YOUR* FAULT! GOSH-- NO!
WHAT'S THAT THING YOU JUST PUSHED?
SPEED ADJU
FAST
SL

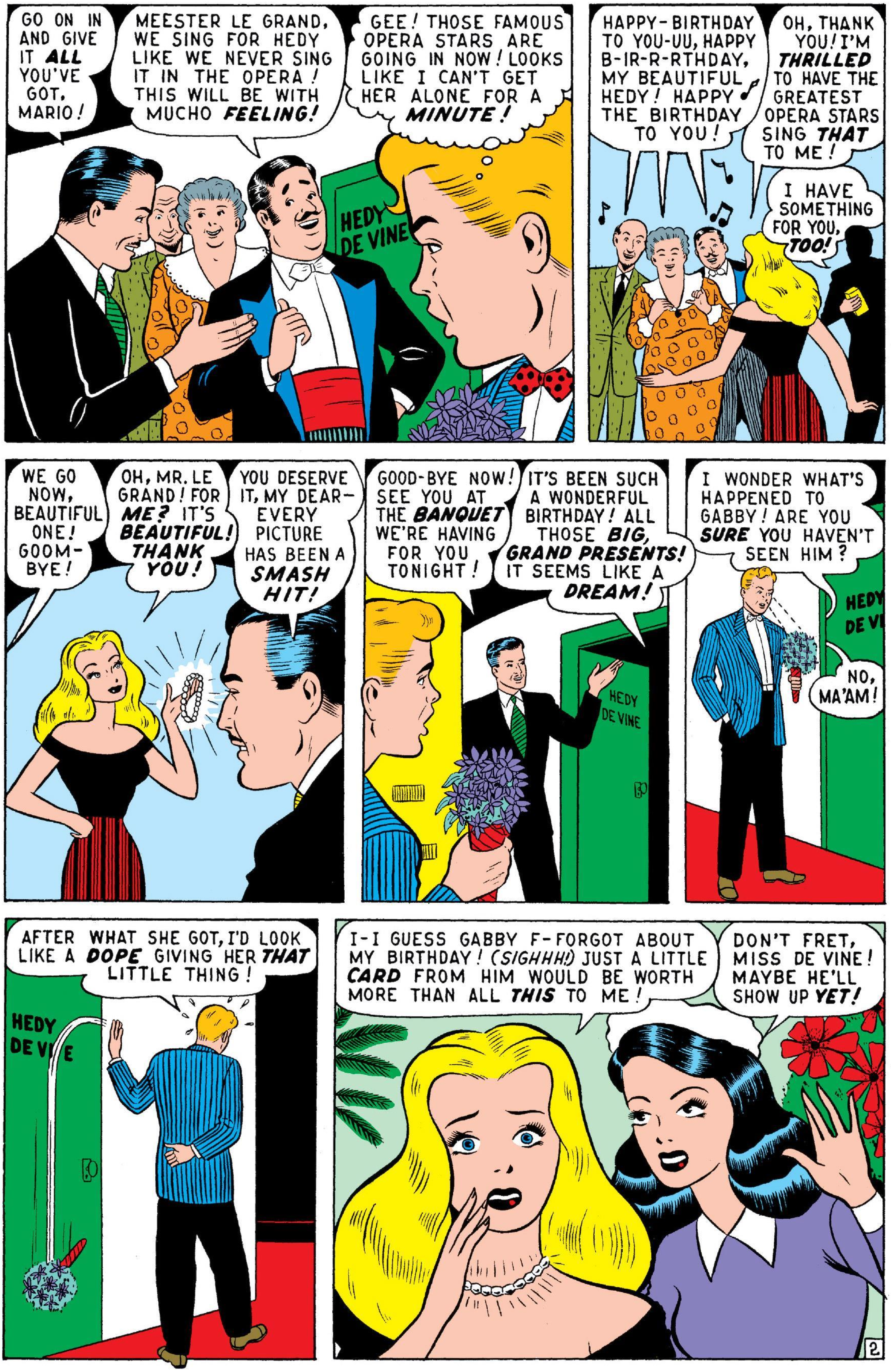

AW, NOTHIN'! JUST A SPEED CONTROL FOR THE PRESSES!
WHR-R-R-R-R!
SPEED ADJUS
FAST SLOW
WELL, DON'T YOU THINK YOU PUSHED IT TOO HARD?
HOLY SMOKE! THE PRESSES ARE OUT OF CONTROL! *THEY'RE RACING TOO FAST!*
LOOK OUT!
THE PRESSES? SPEED? *YIPE!* WHAT'VE I DONE?
WHRR-R-R-R-RR!
I'VE GOT TO STOP THE PRESSES!
OH, DEAR! WHAT CONFUSION!
WHR-R-R-R-R-R-R-R!
MY PLANT! MY MAGAZINES! STOP THAT PRESS! *SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!*

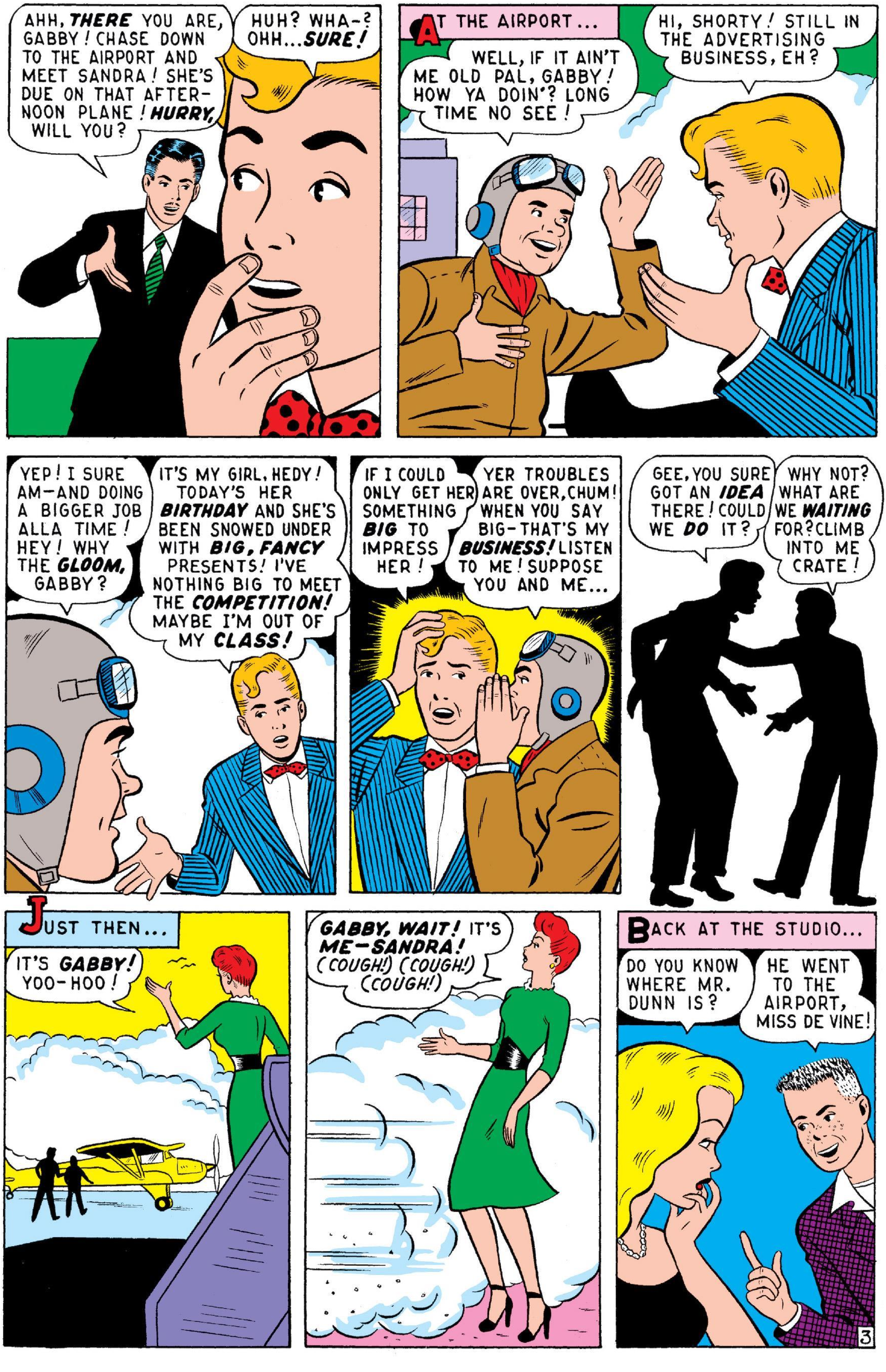

THERE! THAT'LL FIX IT!
ADJUSTER SLOW
THAT WAS VERY INTERESTING, MR. HAMMOND! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SHOW ME NEXT?
NOTHING! WE'RE GOING BACK TO NEW YORK!
LATER, ON THE WAY BACK TO NEW YORK...
I'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND HOW ANYONE AS GORGEOUS AS YOU CAN CAUSE SO MUCH TROUBLE! I'LL NEVER TAKE YOU TO THE PLANT AGAIN! *NEVER!*
ME? HAVE *I* DONE ANYTHING?
AND UPON ARRIVING BACK AT THE OFFICE...
NO, SIR! NEVER AGAIN DO I TAKE *YOU* TO OUR PRINTING PLANT! WHAT'S THIS, DELLA?
THIS TELEGRAM JUST ARRIVED FOR YOU, SIR!
WELL, BACK TO WORK!
OH, NO!
UNION TELEGRAPH
PLEASE BRING VENUS OUT TO OUR PLANT AGAIN SOON! SHE MADE THE MEN SO CHEERFUL AND HAPPY THAT THEY ALL WORKED OVERTIME AND WE BROKE OUR OWN PRODUCTION RECORD! SIGNED JIM BROWN, FOREMAN
IT'S *WONDERFUL* TO BE A WOMAN!
THE END

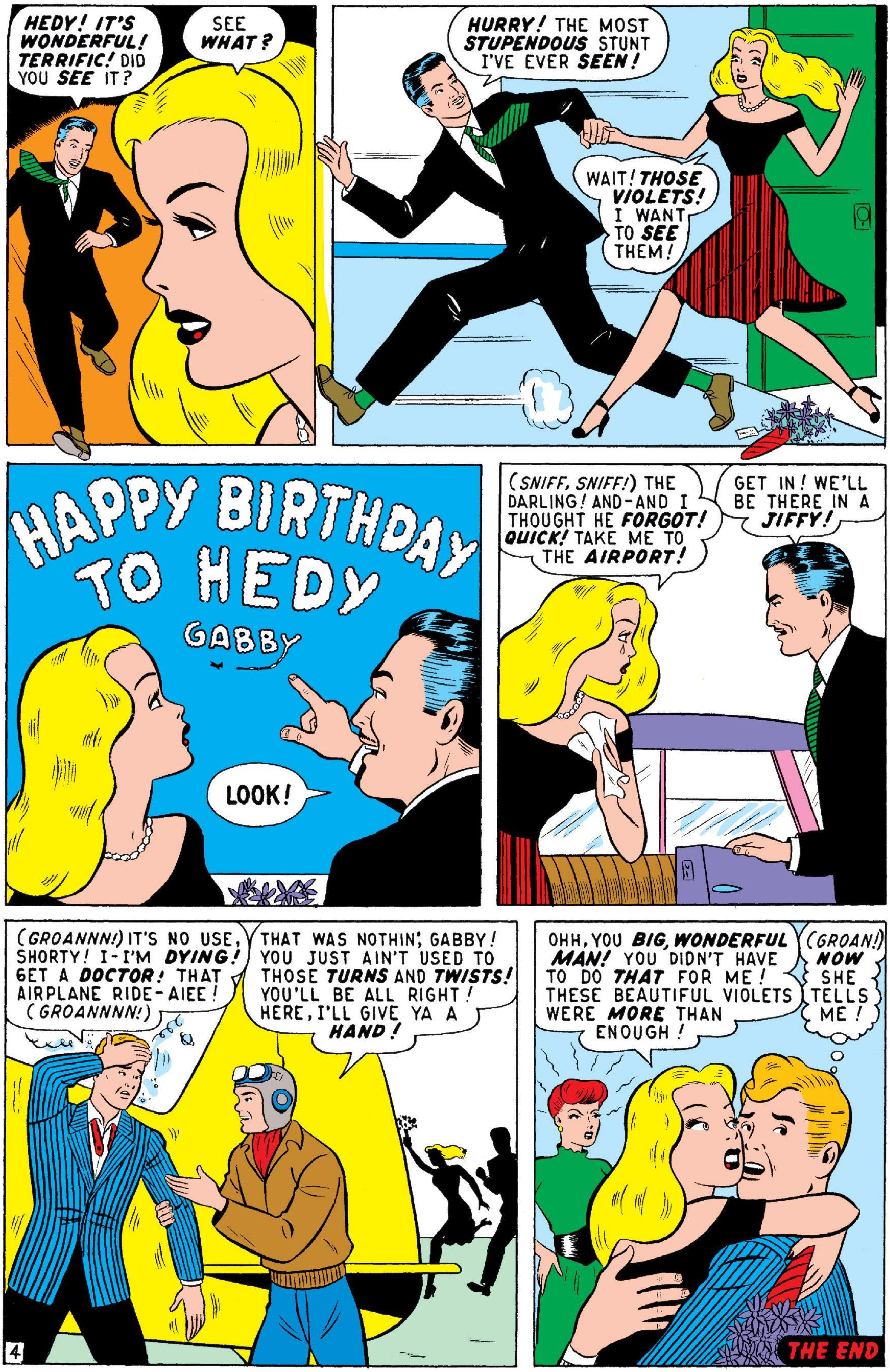

HEDY DE VINE
CLOSE YOUR EYES, HEDY! I HAVE A *BIG* SURPRISE FOR YOU!
CRUNCH!
CRUNCH!
"BIRTHDAY BLUES!"
2899


MORE FLOWERS FOR YOUR *BIRTHDAY,* MISS DE VINE— FROM THE *FAN* CLUBS!
OHH... MARIE, HOW *BEAUTIFUL!* BUT WHAT AM I GOING TO *DO* WITH THEM?


MORE BIRTHDAY PRESENTS, HEDY!
(*GULP*) GOLLY!


GO ON IN AND GIVE IT **ALL** YOU'VE GOT, MARIO!
MEESTER LE GRAND, WE SING FOR HEDY LIKE WE NEVER SING IT IN THE OPERA! THIS WILL BE WITH MUCHO **FEELING!**
GEE! THOSE FAMOUS OPERA STARS ARE GOING IN NOW! LOOKS LIKE I CAN'T GET HER ALONE FOR A **MINUTE!**
HEDY DE VINE
HAPPY-BIRTHDAY TO YOU-UU, HAPPY B-IR-R-RTHDAY, MY BEAUTIFUL HEDY! HAPPY THE BIRTHDAY TO YOU!
OH, THANK YOU! I'M **THRILLED** TO HAVE THE GREATEST OPERA STARS SING **THAT** TO ME!
I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU, **TOO!**
WE GO NOW, BEAUTIFUL ONE! GOOM-BYE!
OH, MR. LE GRAND! FOR **ME?** IT'S **BEAUTIFUL! THANK YOU!**
YOU DESERVE IT, MY DEAR-EVERY PICTURE HAS BEEN A **SMASH HIT!**
GOOD-BYE NOW! SEE YOU AT THE **BANQUET** WE'RE HAVING FOR YOU TONIGHT!
IT'S BEEN SUCH A WONDERFUL BIRTHDAY! ALL THOSE **BIG, GRAND PRESENTS!** IT SEEMS LIKE A **DREAM!**
HEDY DE VINE
I WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENED TO GABBY! ARE YOU **SURE** YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM?
HEDY DE VI
NO, MA'AM!
AFTER WHAT SHE GOT, I'D LOOK LIKE A **DOPE** GIVING HER **THAT** LITTLE THING!
HEDY DE VI E
I-I GUESS GABBY F-FORGOT ABOUT MY BIRTHDAY! (SIGHHH!) JUST A LITTLE **CARD** FROM HIM WOULD BE WORTH MORE THAN ALL **THIS** TO ME!
DON'T FRET, MISS DE VINE! MAYBE HE'LL SHOW UP **YET!**


AHH, **THERE** YOU ARE, GABBY! CHASE DOWN TO THE AIRPORT AND MEET SANDRA! SHE'S DUE ON THAT AFTERNOON PLANE! **HURRY,** WILL YOU?
HUH? WHA-? OHH...**SURE!**
AT THE AIRPORT...
WELL, IF IT AIN'T ME OLD PAL, GABBY! HOW YA DOIN'? LONG TIME NO SEE!
HI, SHORTY! STILL IN THE ADVERTISING BUSINESS, EH?
YEP! I SURE AM—AND DOING A BIGGER JOB ALLA TIME! HEY! WHY THE **GLOOM,** GABBY?
IT'S MY GIRL, HEDY! TODAY'S HER **BIRTHDAY** AND SHE'S BEEN SNOWED UNDER WITH **BIG, FANCY** PRESENTS! I'VE NOTHING BIG TO MEET THE **COMPETITION!** MAYBE I'M OUT OF MY **CLASS!**
IF I COULD ONLY GET HER SOMETHING **BIG** TO IMPRESS HER!
YER TROUBLES ARE OVER, CHUM! WHEN YOU SAY BIG-THAT'S MY **BUSINESS!** LISTEN TO ME! SUPPOSE YOU AND ME...
GEE, YOU SURE GOT AN **IDEA** THERE! COULD WE **DO** IT?
WHY NOT? WHAT ARE WE **WAITING** FOR? CLIMB INTO ME CRATE!
JUST THEN...
IT'S **GABBY!** YOO-HOO!
GABBY, WAIT! IT'S **ME—SANDRA!** (COUGH!) (COUGH!) (COUGH!)
BACK AT THE STUDIO...
DO YOU KNOW WHERE MR. DUNN IS?
HE WENT TO THE AIRPORT, MISS DE VINE!


HEDY! IT'S WONDERFUL! TERRIFIC! DID YOU SEE IT?
SEE WHAT?
HURRY! THE MOST STUPENDOUS STUNT I'VE EVER SEEN!
WAIT! THOSE VIOLETS! I WANT TO SEE THEM!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO HEDY
GABBY
LOOK!
(SNIFF, SNIFF!) THE DARLING! AND-AND I THOUGHT HE FORGOT! QUICK! TAKE ME TO THE AIRPORT!
GET IN! WE'LL BE THERE IN A JIFFY!
(GROANNN!) IT'S NO USE, SHORTY! I-I'M DYING! GET A DOCTOR! THAT AIRPLANE RIDE-AIEE! (GROANNNN!)
THAT WAS NOTHIN', GABBY! YOU JUST AIN'T USED TO THOSE TURNS AND TWISTS! YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT! HERE, I'LL GIVE YA A HAND!
4
OHH, YOU BIG, WONDERFUL MAN! YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT FOR ME! THESE BEAUTIFUL VIOLETS WERE MORE THAN ENOUGH!
(GROAN!) NOW SHE TELLS ME!
THE END

MURDER IN MINIATURE

ALONE in his bedroom, Robert Crane grimly unlocked his trunk and took out the little revolver which he'd kept hidden there. He knew now that he'd have to use it. He had felt for a week that Manton suspected him. Now it was obvious. Crane stared again at his bottom bureau drawer. As always it had been locked when he left for town after dinner tonight. He'd just returned and discovered that the drawer had been forced open. Manton had come in here, of course, and had found in the drawer the special pens and the practice samples which Crane had made of James Manton's signature!

Bob Crane had always had a flare for freehand forgery, but he'd never used it until now. It had been simple. He was secretary to the rich, retired, old bachelor and lived here with him in Manton's big country home two miles from town. He handled Manton's personal checking account, paid all the bills, made out all the necessary checks for Manton to sign. So it was simple enough to write a few of his own, and he'd been doing it in a small way for several months.

Now Manton had discovered it. He'd have the proof tomorrow when he went to the bank and looked over his canceled checks. The forgeries would be identified.

Then it would be jail for Robert Crane. So the thing had to be done now—tonight. The big, old house was dim and silent as Crane quietly put the revolver in his pocket and went down the long staircase to the lower floor. Mrs. Jones, the housekeeper, always left after dinner so Crane and Manton were alone.

Manton was in his study downstairs. He wasn't in good health now; he seldom went out, just puttered around, mostly with photography, his hobby. Crane knew very little about taking pictures and cared less. Unless you could make money out of it, it seemed a silly thing to him, especially the sort of stuff that Manton puttered with—what he called "table-top" photography.

Crane's tall, thin figure loomed in the study doorway. His heart was pounding. Manton's study was a queer little room. A small darkroom was boarded off in one corner, and in the center of the room was a large board table. Manton was standing in back of the table now—a frail little man with a big mop of iron-gray hair. He turned around as Crane pushed the door open.

"Oh, it's you," he said. "Come in if you like, Bob. I'm just about to make a picture. Going to enter it in the Camera Club competition. It'll be a long time exposure—half an hour maybe. Want to wait?" He motioned toward the table. "What do you think of it?"

The table top was flanked with cardboard scenery which Manton had made. The overhead lights gleamed down on a small realistic scene of a room with two tiny figures in it—a man leaning over another man, stabbing him in the back. Murder in miniature. But Crane wasn't interested. He was trying to tell himself that maybe Manton hadn't discovered the forgeries. He must make absolutely sure. Breathlessly, he said, "Somebody broke into one of my bureau drawers tonight. Somebody . . ."

And at once he knew! Manton's thin face went grim. "Oh, so you want to talk about *that,* do you? I was figuring I'd wait till I went to the bank. I . . ."

Crane murmured, "All right, you're asking for it!" He was hardly aware that he was suddenly leveling the little revolver. But Manton saw it. He gasped, jumped sideways.

"Why—why, Bob . . ."

That was all he could say. Crane leaped forward. The revolver barked and Manton staggered, flinging up his arms. Even with the bullet in his head, he seemed to teeter for a moment, swaying like a dead man balanced on his feet. Then he pitched forward. His body hit the table, and a little stool was overturned. Finally the body hit the floor with a thud, lay twitching for a moment, and then was motionless.

The thing was finished. For a moment, bathed in cold sweat, Robert Crane stood quietly with the smoking little gun in his hand. But triumph was in him. Nobody else would ever bother to balance Manton's bank account now. And there was a legacy of a few thousand that he knew he would get from Manton's will.

Crane had figured out carefully what he must do now. He carefully wiped his fingerprints off the revolver handle and dropped the gun out of one of the study windows. The window was only a few feet above ground, and he left it open at the bottom. Then he ran from the room into the big foyer where he phoned the local police, gasping out the tragic news that he had just walked home from town and found Mr. Manton lying here dead, shot through the temple.

. . . Definite proof is necessary merely to put a man on trial for murder, much less to convict him, Bob Crane was comfortably telling himself as he stood watching Police Lieutenant Robinson and his men poke about the place, looking for clues. Much good it would do them!

"If there's anything I can do to help, Lieutenant," Crane murmured, "please call on me. This terrible thing . . ."

"Killer evidently went out that window," Robinson said. "Dropped the gun outside on the ground there."

"Might give you his fingerprints, mightn't it?" Crane said.

"Might," Robinson agreed. "Pete, our fingerprint man, hasn't come yet. When he . . ."

The entrance of another man interrupted him. "Oh, Pete," the lieutenant said, "just talking about you. Take a look at this gun. See what you can lift from it."

But the fingerprint man couldn't find anything. The gun had no prints on it. "Foxy killer," Crane murmured.

Robinson was bending down to the floor, but he checked himself abruptly. When he stood up, he had something in his hand. Crane couldn't see what it was, but Robinson had a strange look in his eyes.

Suddenly Crane's heart was pounding. "What—what is it?" But Robinson stalked past him into the little darkroom in the corner of the studio. Crane followed him.

"Want to watch?" Robinson said. "Okay."

He had found a little camera on the floor. "Manton had it on a stool," Robinson said. "When he was shot, the stool went over and the camera fell to the floor."

Crane remembered seeing it there on the stool—the camera with which Manton was going to photograph the table top scene. "Queer thing," Robinson was saying. "The shutter was open. Guess he was making a time exposure of that table top business. When the camera fell, it fell face down and covered up the lens so maybe the picture's still here."

And Crane had been in front of that camera! So what? Even he knew enough about photography to realize that with those weak room lights something momentarily in front of the camera wouldn't be recorded. And Manton had said, "Half an hour time exposure."

Crane's fears left him. This fool lieutenant evidently thought he had a good lead, but he probably knew nothing at all about photography!

Robinson, however, was developing the little plate with a very evident skill. He rocked it in the developing tray, held it up to the ruby light, rinsed it quickly and dropped it in the hypo. "Well," he said, "that's that! I guess we've got you all right, Crane!"

"Got me? Why—what do you mean?" Crane gasped.

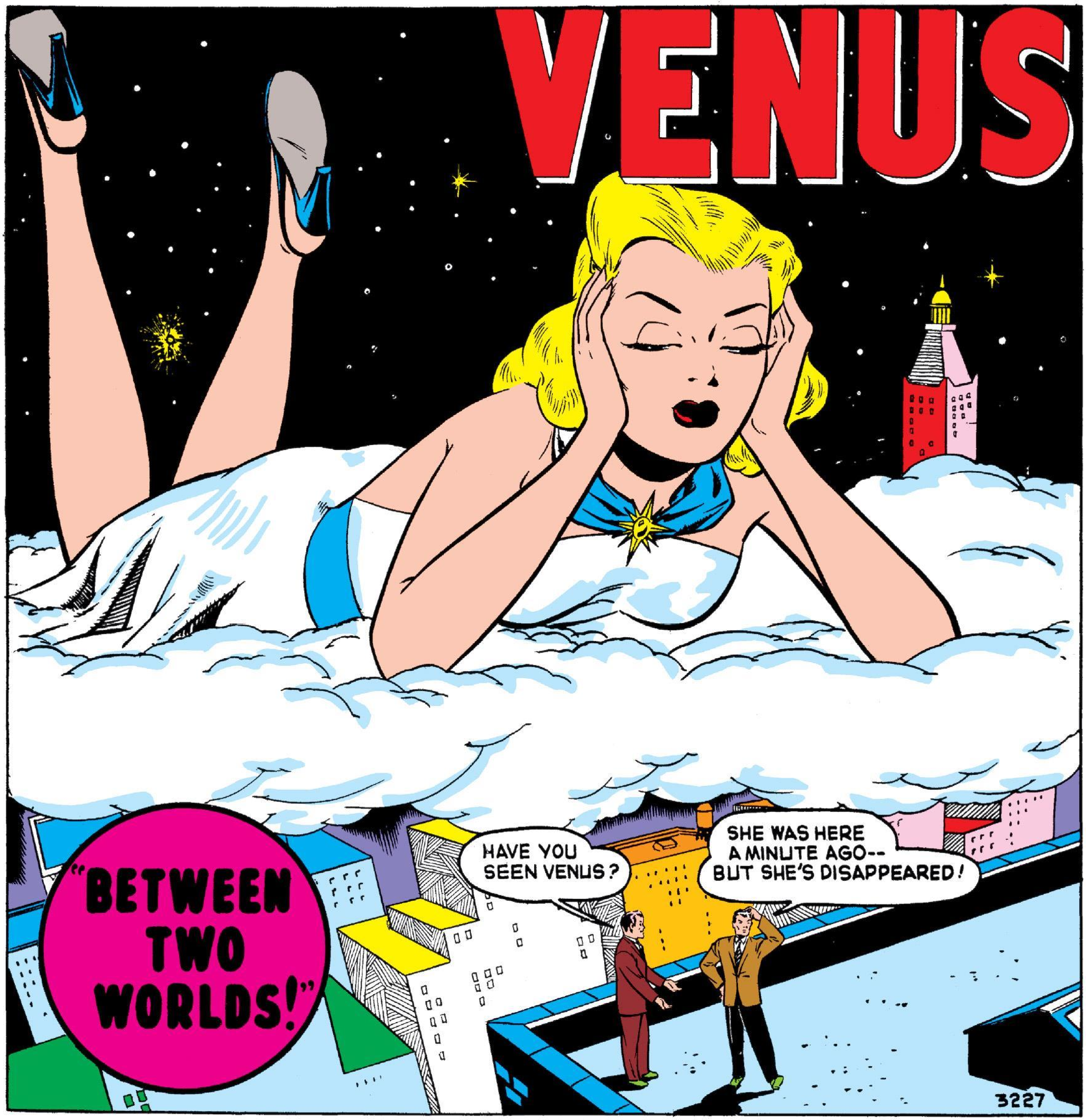
"Wait a minute, I'll show you," Robinson said. "Couldn't be better evidence—just like catching a murderer red-handed!"

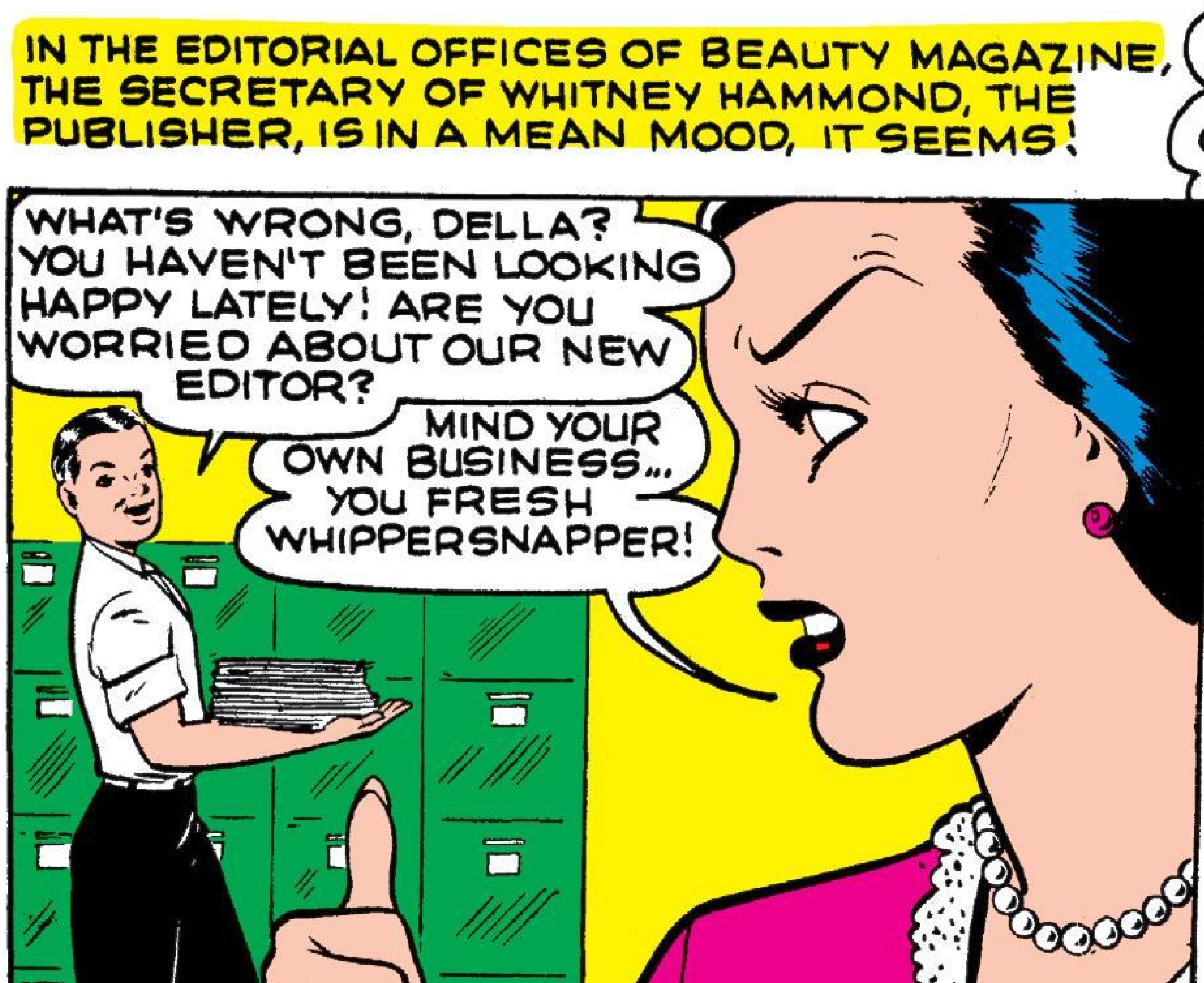
Then he held up the dripping plate. "See," Robinson said, "there's the faint image of the table top scene. Guess he'd given it maybe five or ten minutes' exposure when you barged in. And there's also the blob of a light flare—and two big figures. All pretty blurred, but you can't miss it. There *you* are, Crane! See the gun you're holding, with the flame spitting from it! Caught you right in the act!"

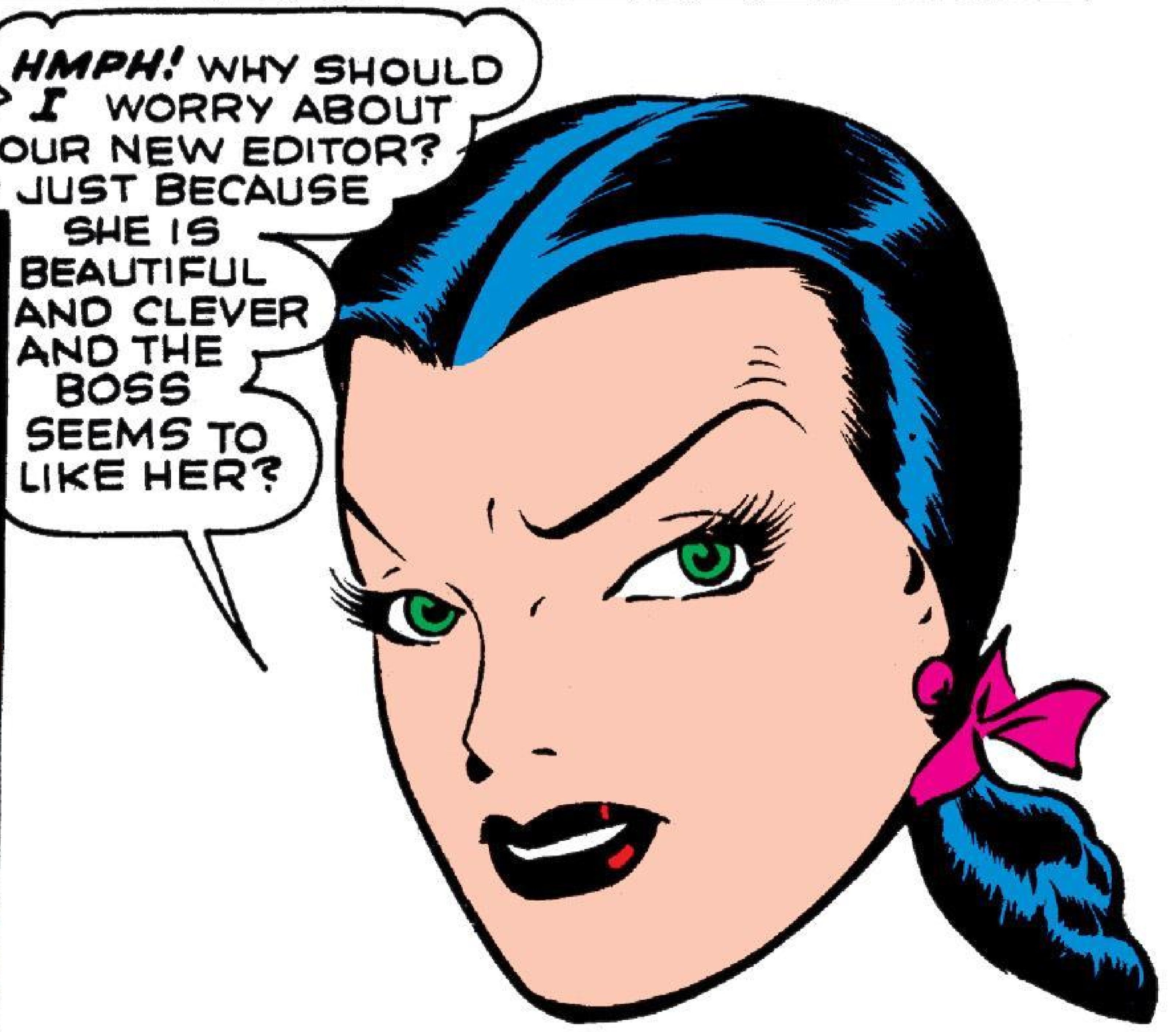
Numbly the horrified Crane stared. He had photographed himself by the light of his own gun flash!

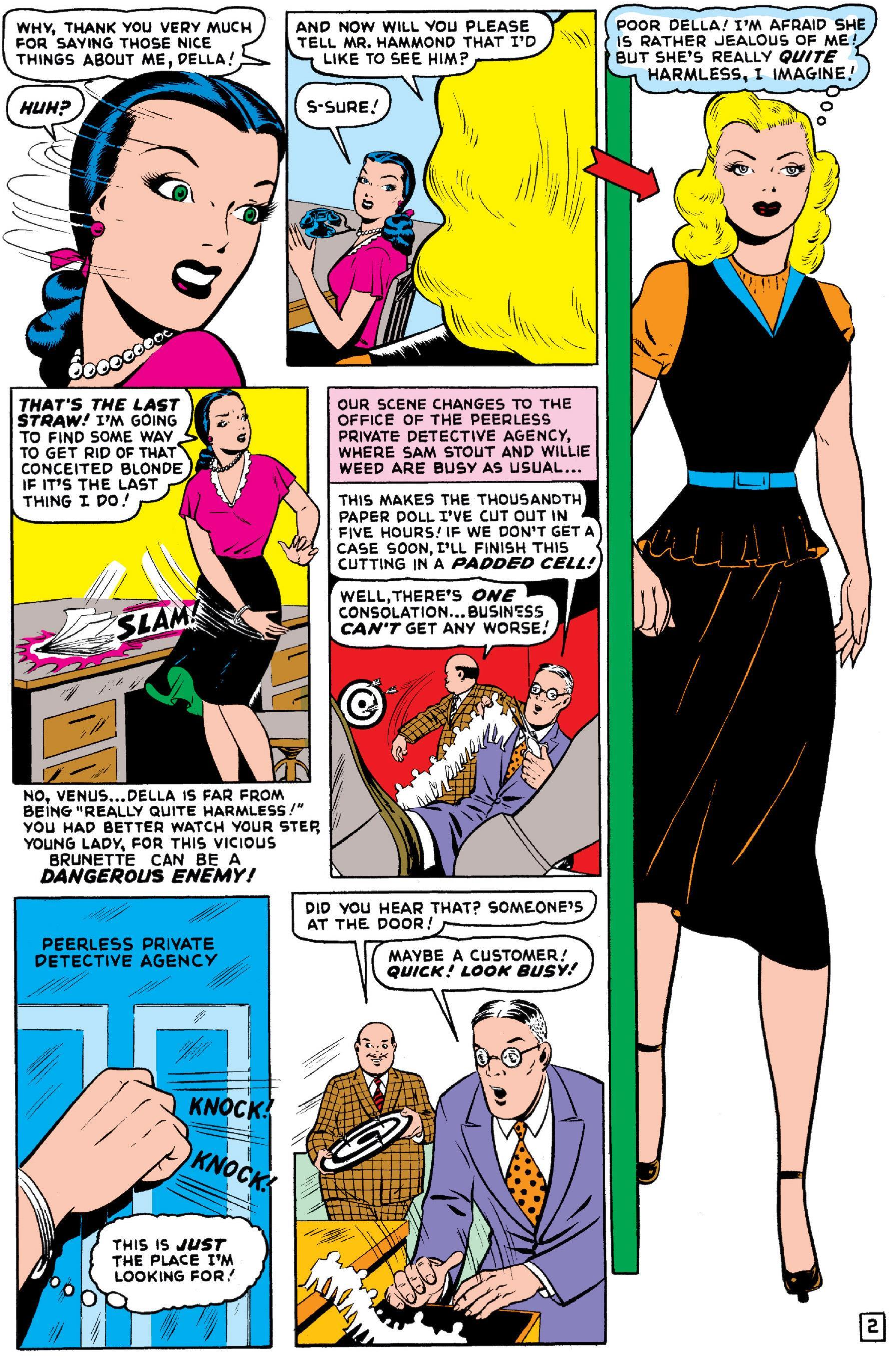
THE END

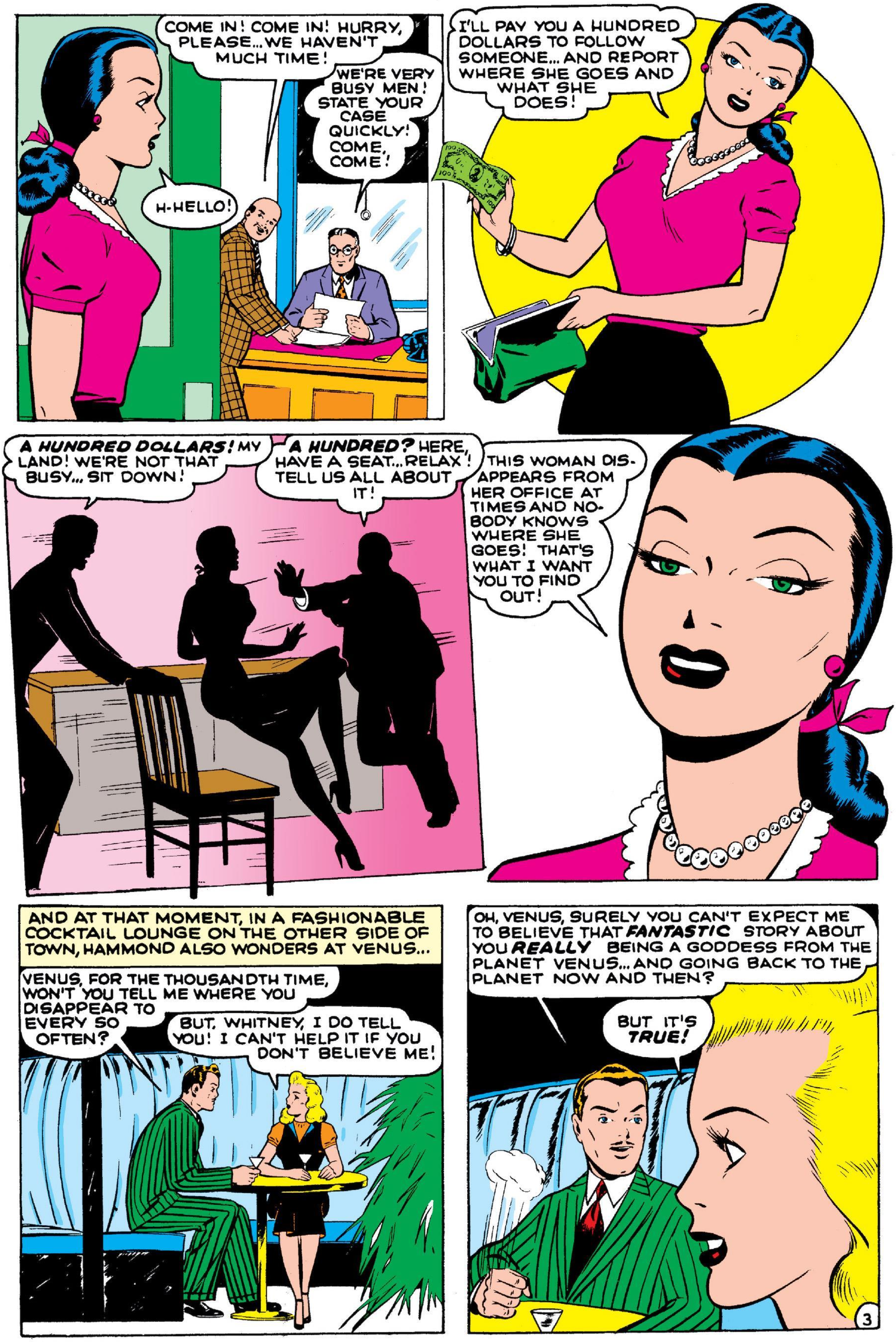
SL-3149

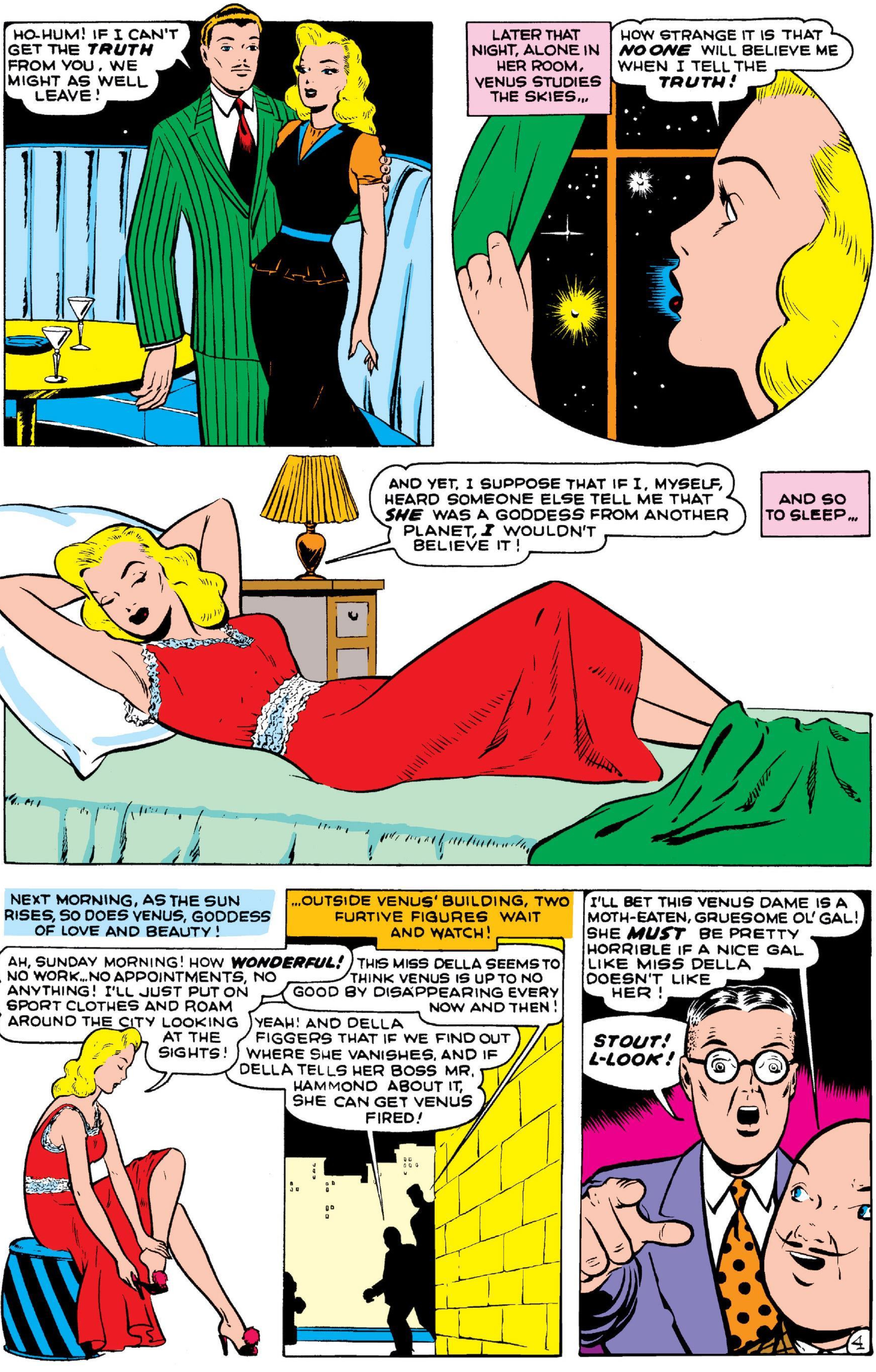

VENUS
"BETWEEN TWO WORLDS!"
HAVE YOU SEEN VENUS?
SHE WAS HERE A MINUTE AGO-- BUT SHE'S DISAPPEARED!
3227

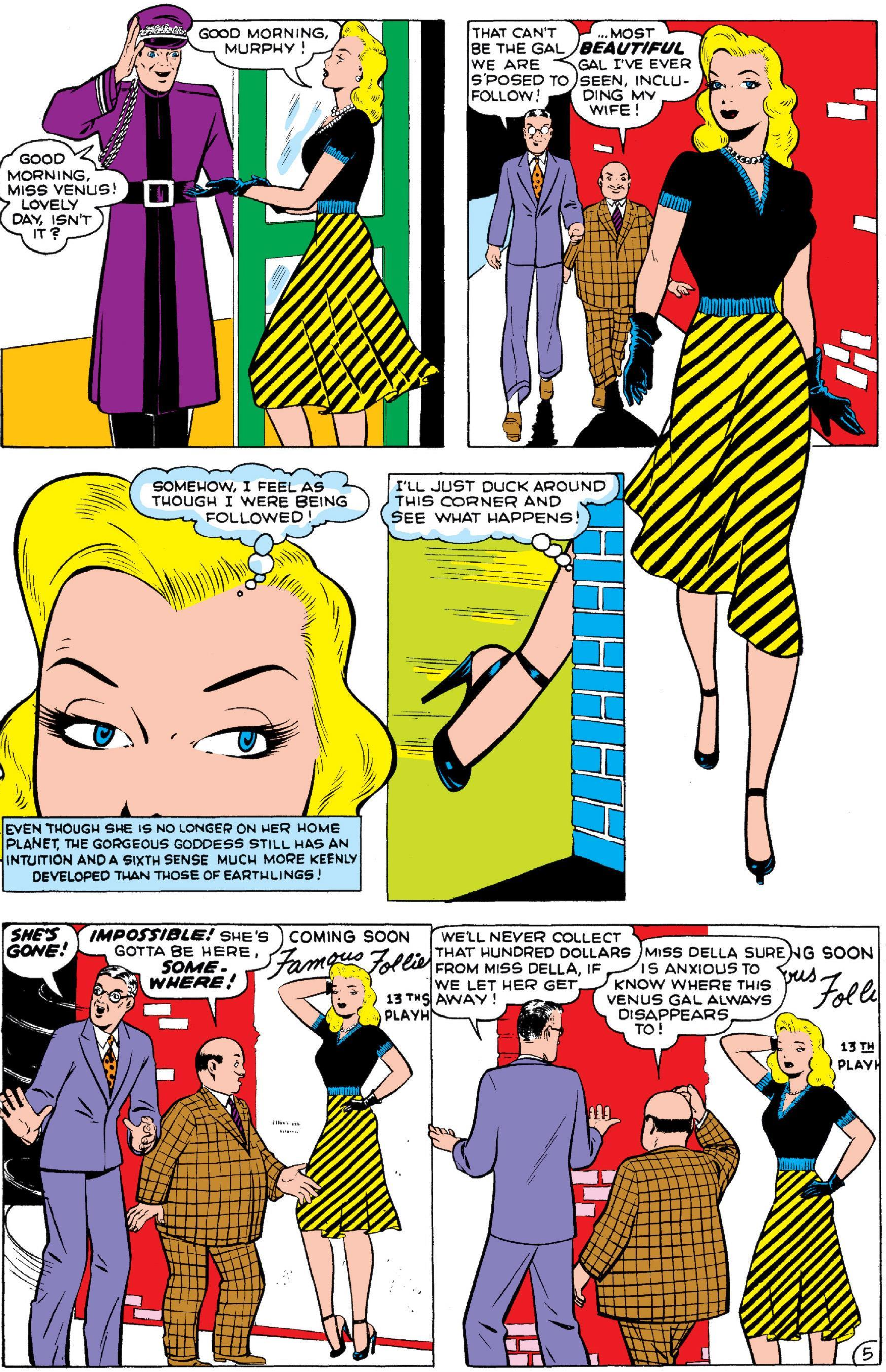

IN THE EDITORIAL OFFICES OF BEAUTY MAGAZINE, THE SECRETARY OF WHITNEY HAMMOND, THE PUBLISHER, IS IN A MEAN MOOD, IT SEEMS!
WHAT'S WRONG, DELLA? YOU HAVEN'T BEEN LOOKING HAPPY LATELY! ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT OUR NEW EDITOR?
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS... YOU FRESH WHIPPERSNAPPER!

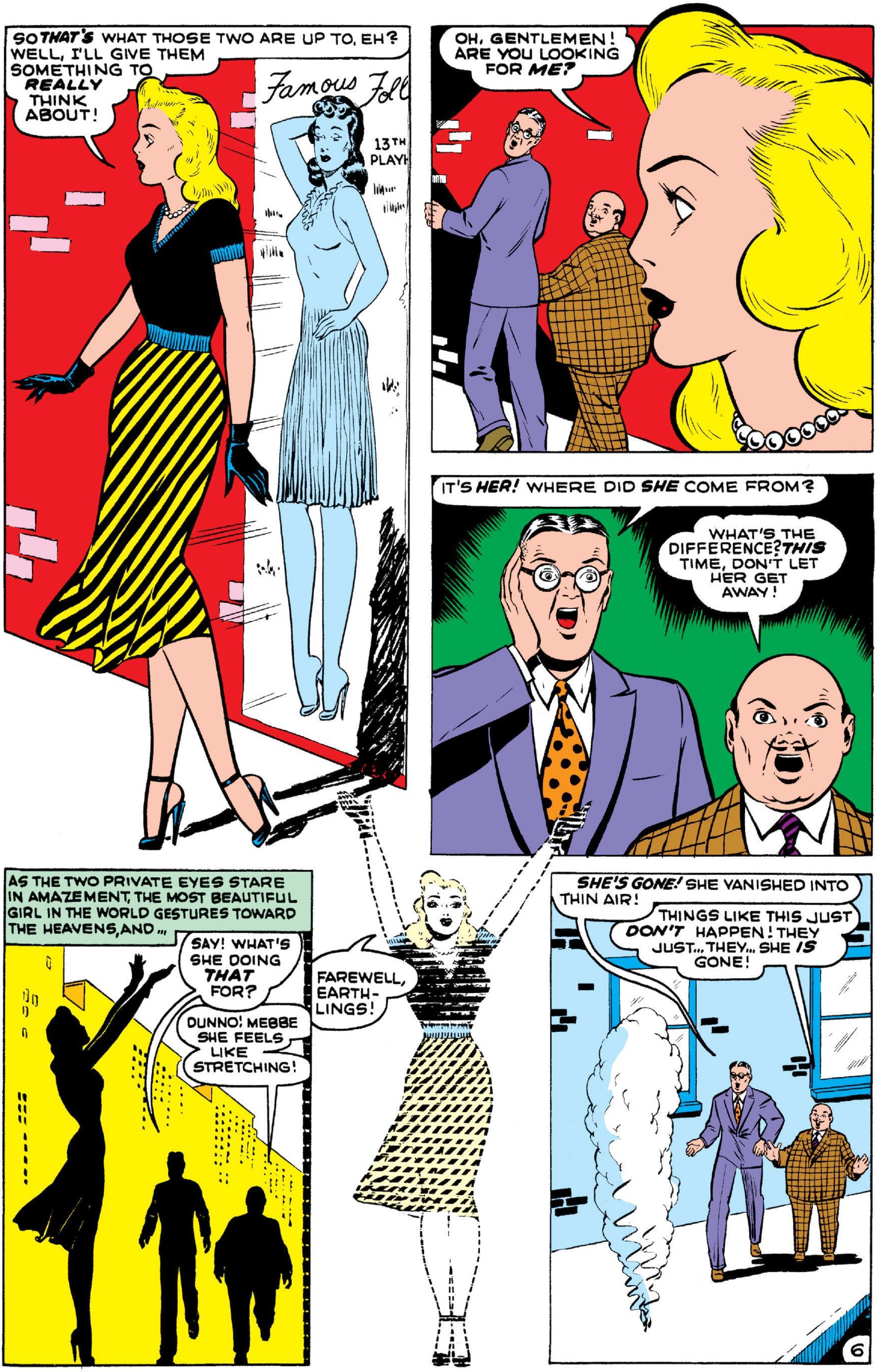

HMPH! WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT OUR NEW EDITOR? JUST BECAUSE SHE IS BEAUTIFUL AND CLEVER AND THE BOSS SEEMS TO LIKE HER?

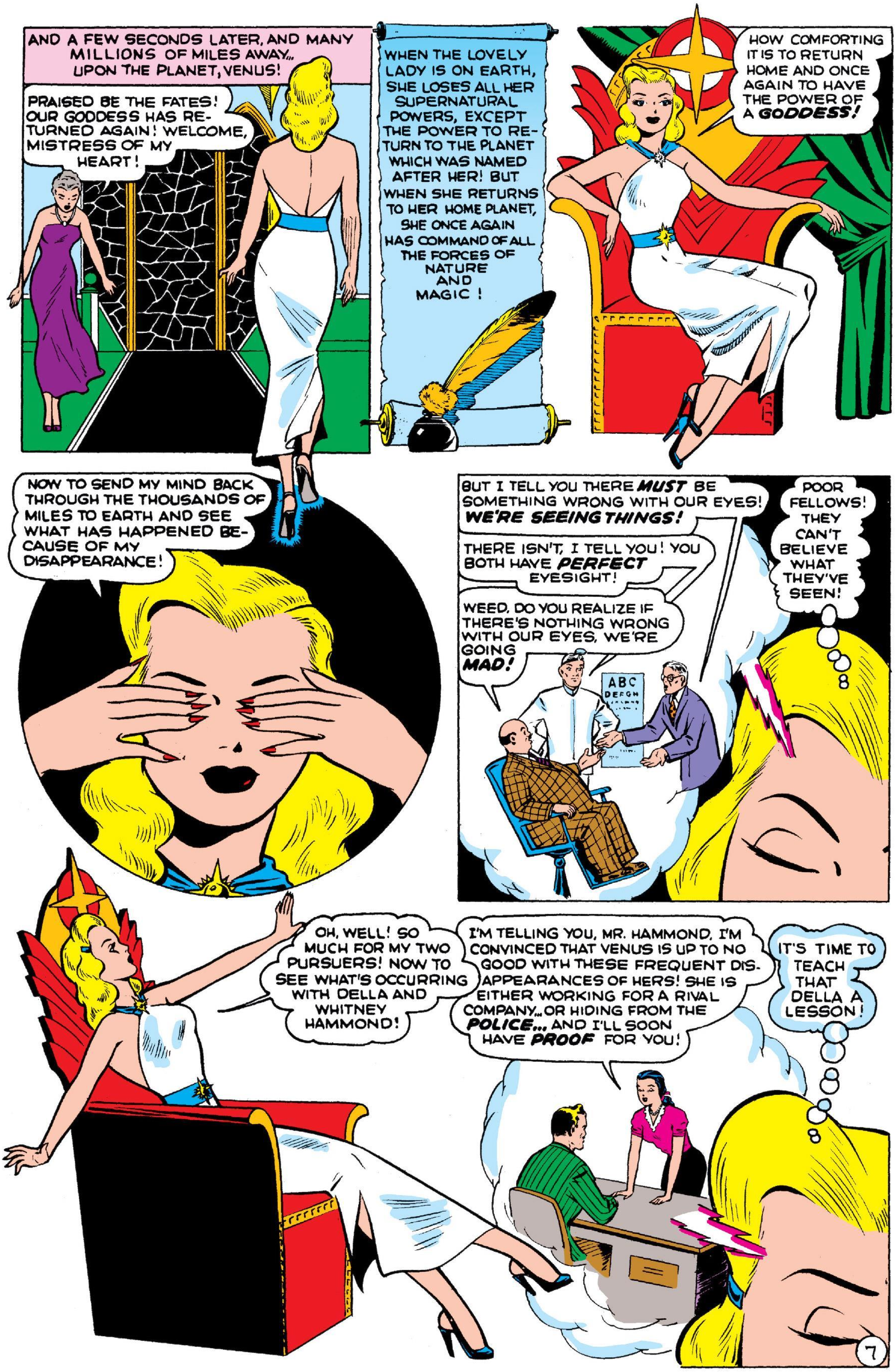

WHY, THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SAYING THOSE NICE THINGS ABOUT ME, DELLA!
HUH?
AND NOW WILL YOU PLEASE TELL MR. HAMMOND THAT I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM?
S-SURE!
POOR DELLA! I'M AFRAID SHE IS RATHER JEALOUS OF ME! BUT SHE'S REALLY QUITE HARMLESS, I IMAGINE!
THAT'S THE LAST STRAW! I'M GOING TO FIND SOME WAY TO GET RID OF THAT CONCEITED BLONDE IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO!
SLAM!
NO, VENUS...DELLA IS FAR FROM BEING "REALLY QUITE HARMLESS!" YOU HAD BETTER WATCH YOUR STEP, YOUNG LADY, FOR THIS VICIOUS BRUNETTE CAN BE A DANGEROUS ENEMY!
OUR SCENE CHANGES TO THE OFFICE OF THE PEERLESS PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY, WHERE SAM STOUT AND WILLIE WEED ARE BUSY AS USUAL...
THIS MAKES THE THOUSANDTH PAPER DOLL I'VE CUT OUT IN FIVE HOURS! IF WE DON'T GET A CASE SOON, I'LL FINISH THIS CUTTING IN A PADDED CELL!
WELL, THERE'S ONE CONSOLATION... BUSINESS CAN'T GET ANY WORSE!
PEERLESS PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY
KNOCK!
KNOCK!
THIS IS JUST THE PLACE I'M LOOKING FOR!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR!
MAYBE A CUSTOMER! QUICK! LOOK BUSY!

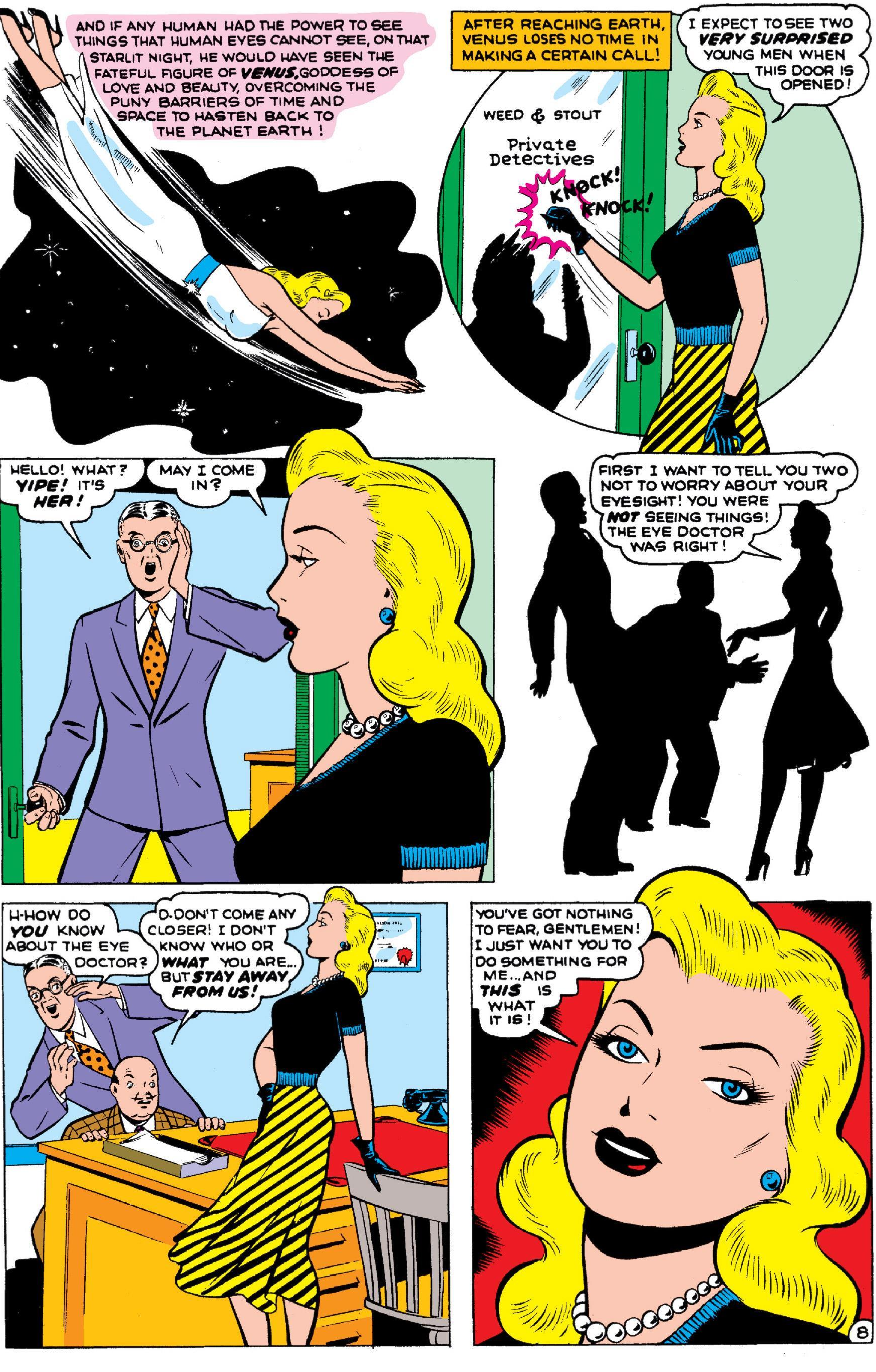

COME IN! COME IN! HURRY, PLEASE... WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME!
WE'RE VERY BUSY MEN! STATE YOUR CASE QUICKLY! COME, COME!
H-HELLO!
I'LL PAY YOU A HUNDRED DOLLARS TO FOLLOW SOMEONE... AND REPORT WHERE SHE GOES AND WHAT SHE DOES!
A HUNDRED DOLLARS! MY LAND! WE'RE NOT THAT BUSY... SIT DOWN!
A HUNDRED? HERE, HAVE A SEAT... RELAX! TELL US ALL ABOUT IT!
THIS WOMAN DISAPPEARS FROM HER OFFICE AT TIMES AND NOBODY KNOWS WHERE SHE GOES! THAT'S WHAT I WANT YOU TO FIND OUT!
AND AT THAT MOMENT, IN A FASHIONABLE COCKTAIL LOUNGE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN, HAMMOND ALSO WONDERS AT VENUS...
VENUS, FOR THE THOUSANDTH TIME, WON'T YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU DISAPPEAR TO EVERY SO OFTEN?
BUT, WHITNEY, I DO TELL YOU! I CAN'T HELP IT IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME!
OH, VENUS, SURELY YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT FANTASTIC STORY ABOUT YOU REALLY BEING A GODDESS FROM THE PLANET VENUS... AND GOING BACK TO THE PLANET NOW AND THEN?
BUT IT'S TRUE!
3

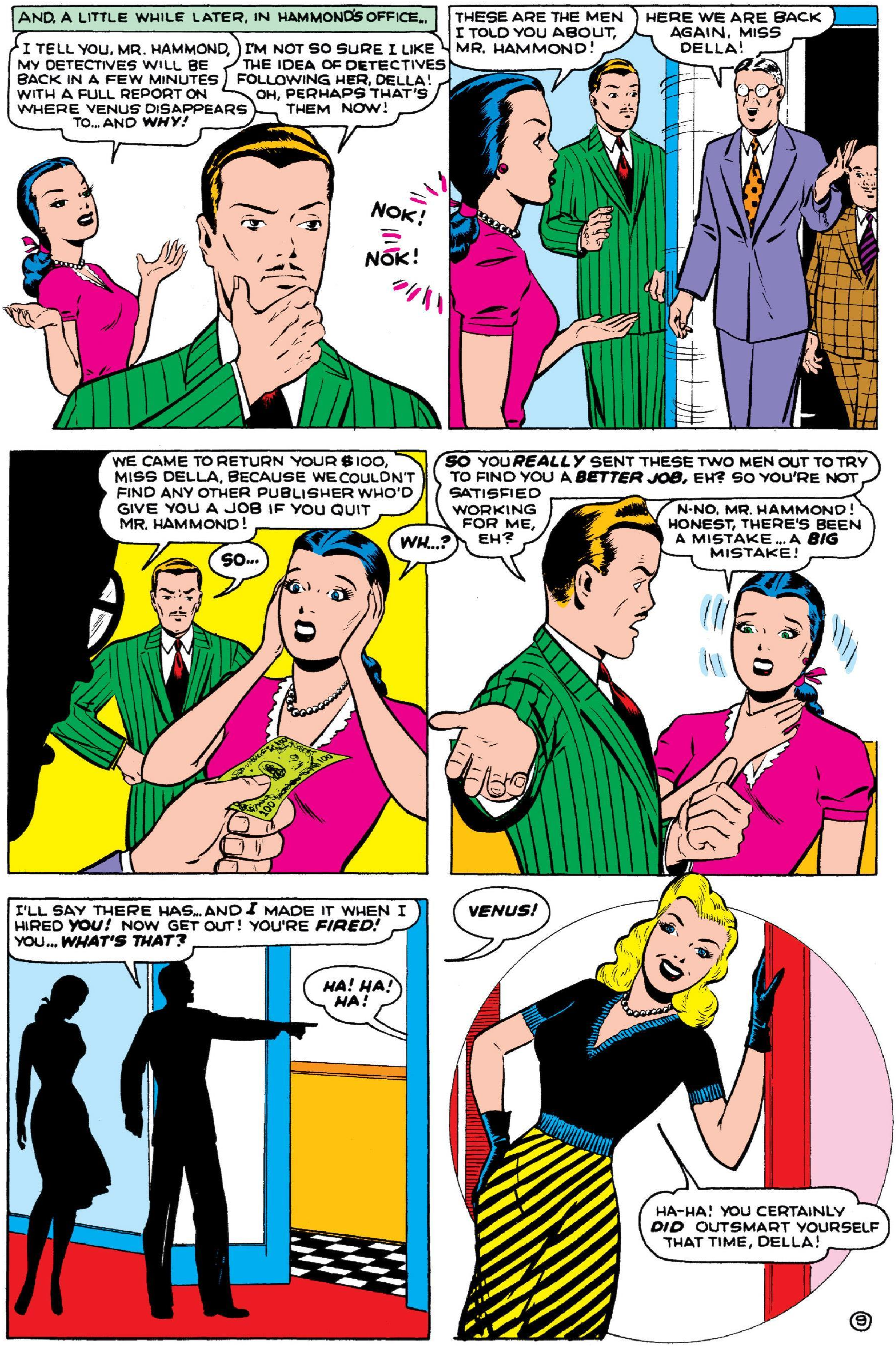

HO-HUM! IF I CAN'T GET THE **TRUTH** FROM YOU, WE MIGHT AS WELL LEAVE!
LATER THAT NIGHT, ALONE IN HER ROOM, VENUS STUDIES THE SKIES...
HOW STRANGE IT IS THAT **NO ONE** WILL BELIEVE ME WHEN I TELL THE **TRUTH!**
AND YET, I SUPPOSE THAT IF I, MYSELF, HEARD SOMEONE ELSE TELL ME THAT **SHE** WAS A GODDESS FROM ANOTHER PLANET, **I** WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT!
AND SO TO SLEEP...
NEXT MORNING, AS THE SUN RISES, SO DOES VENUS, GODDESS OF LOVE AND BEAUTY!
AH, SUNDAY MORNING! HOW **WONDERFUL!** NO WORK...NO APPOINTMENTS, NO ANYTHING! I'LL JUST PUT ON SPORT CLOTHES AND ROAM AROUND THE CITY LOOKING AT THE SIGHTS!
...OUTSIDE VENUS' BUILDING, TWO FURTIVE FIGURES WAIT AND WATCH!
THIS MISS DELLA SEEMS TO THINK VENUS IS UP TO NO GOOD BY DISAPPEARING EVERY NOW AND THEN!
YEAH! AND DELLA FIGGERS THAT IF WE FIND OUT WHERE SHE VANISHES, AND IF DELLA TELLS HER BOSS MR. HAMMOND ABOUT IT, SHE CAN GET VENUS FIRED!
I'LL BET THIS VENUS DAME IS A MOTH-EATEN, GRUESOME OL' GAL! SHE **MUST** BE PRETTY HORRIBLE IF A NICE GAL LIKE MISS DELLA DOESN'T LIKE HER!
STOUT! L-LOOK!

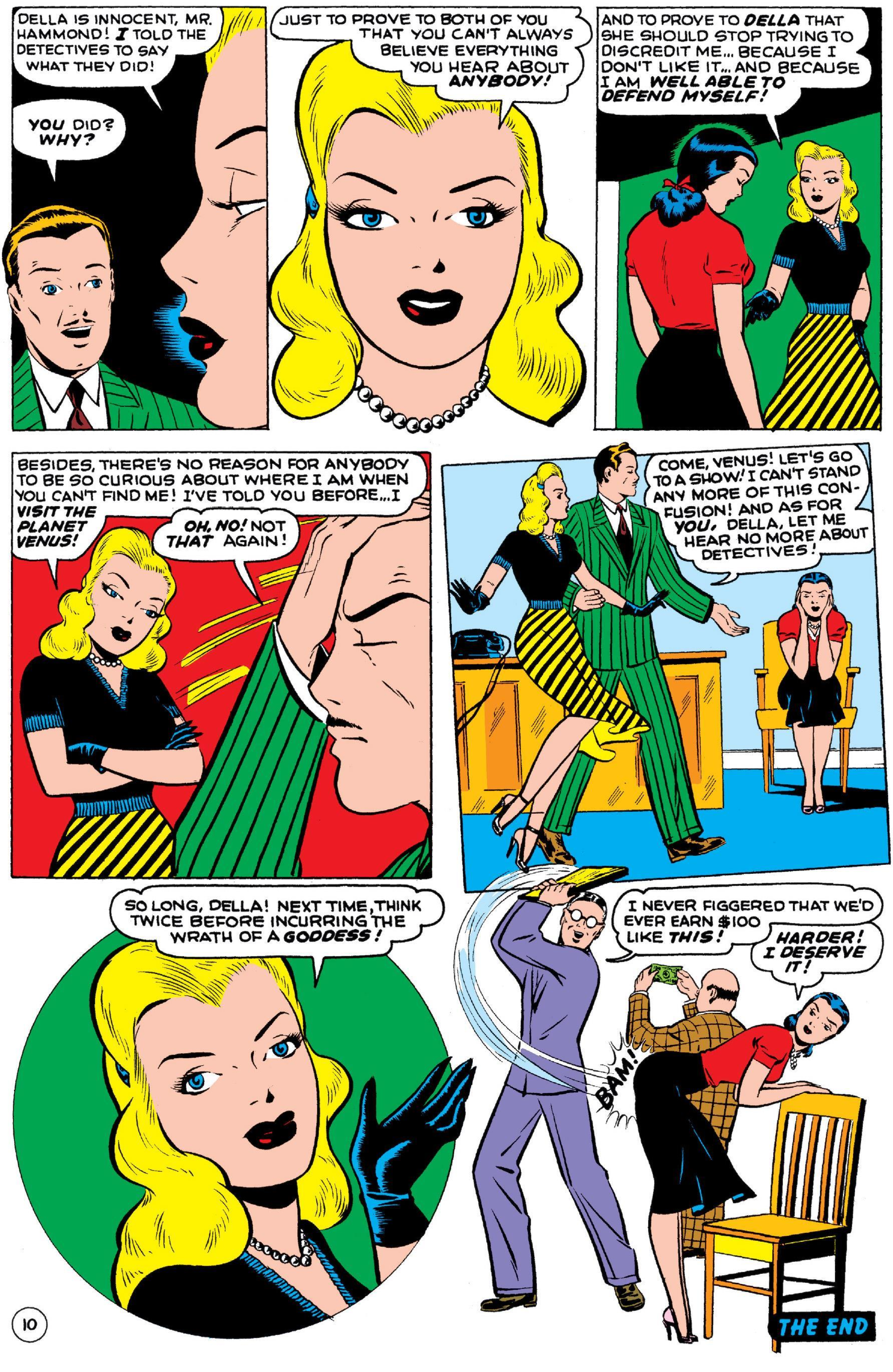

GOOD MORNING, MURPHY!
GOOD MORNING, MISS VENUS! LOVELY DAY, ISN'T IT?
THAT CAN'T BE THE GAL WE ARE S'POSED TO FOLLOW!
...MOST **BEAUTIFUL** GAL I'VE EVER SEEN, INCLUDING MY WIFE!
SOMEHOW, I FEEL AS THOUGH I WERE BEING FOLLOWED!
EVEN THOUGH SHE IS NO LONGER ON HER HOME PLANET, THE GORGEOUS GODDESS STILL HAS AN INTUITION AND A SIXTH SENSE MUCH MORE KEENLY DEVELOPED THAN THOSE OF EARTHLINGS!
I'LL JUST DUCK AROUND THIS CORNER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!
SHE'S GONE!
IMPOSSIBLE! SHE'S GOTTA BE HERE, **SOME-WHERE!**
COMING SOON
Famous Follie
13 THS
PLAYH
WE'LL NEVER COLLECT THAT HUNDRED DOLLARS FROM MISS DELLA, IF WE LET HER GET AWAY!
MISS DELLA SURE IS ANXIOUS TO KNOW WHERE THIS VENUS GAL ALWAYS DISAPPEARS TO!
NG SOON
ous Folli
13 TH
PLAYH


SO **THAT'S** WHAT THOSE TWO ARE UP TO, EH? WELL, I'LL GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO **REALLY** THINK ABOUT!
Famous Foll
13TH
PLAYH
OH, GENTLEMEN! ARE YOU LOOKING FOR **ME?**
IT'S **HER!** WHERE DID **SHE** COME FROM?
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? **THIS** TIME, DON'T LET HER GET AWAY!
AS THE TWO PRIVATE EYES STARE IN AMAZEMENT, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD GESTURES TOWARD THE HEAVENS, AND ...
SAY! WHAT'S SHE DOING **THAT** FOR?
DUNNO! MEBBE SHE FEELS LIKE STRETCHING!
FAREWELL, EARTHLINGS!
SHE'S GONE! SHE VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!
THINGS LIKE THIS JUST **DON'T** HAPPEN! THEY JUST... THEY... SHE **IS** GONE!


AND A FEW SECONDS LATER, AND MANY MILLIONS OF MILES AWAY... UPON THE PLANET, VENUS!
PRAISED BE THE FATES! OUR GODDESS HAS RETURNED AGAIN! WELCOME, MISTRESS OF MY HEART!
WHEN THE LOVELY LADY IS ON EARTH, SHE LOSES ALL HER SUPERNATURAL POWERS, EXCEPT THE POWER TO RETURN TO THE PLANET WHICH WAS NAMED AFTER HER! BUT WHEN SHE RETURNS TO HER HOME PLANET, SHE ONCE AGAIN HAS COMMAND OF ALL THE FORCES OF NATURE AND MAGIC!
HOW COMFORTING IT IS TO RETURN HOME AND ONCE AGAIN TO HAVE THE POWER OF A ***GODDESS!***
NOW TO SEND MY MIND BACK THROUGH THE THOUSANDS OF MILES TO EARTH AND SEE WHAT HAS HAPPENED BECAUSE OF MY DISAPPEARANCE!
BUT I TELL YOU THERE ***MUST*** BE SOMETHING WRONG WITH OUR EYES! ***WE'RE SEEING THINGS!***
THERE ISN'T, I TELL YOU! YOU BOTH HAVE ***PERFECT*** EYESIGHT!
WEED, DO YOU REALIZE IF THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH OUR EYES, WE'RE GOING ***MAD!***
ABC DEFGH
POOR FELLOWS! THEY CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY'VE SEEN!
OH, WELL! SO MUCH FOR MY TWO PURSUERS! NOW TO SEE WHAT'S OCCURRING WITH DELLA AND WHITNEY HAMMOND!
I'M TELLING YOU, MR. HAMMOND, I'M CONVINCED THAT VENUS IS UP TO NO GOOD WITH THESE FREQUENT DISAPPEARANCES OF HERS! SHE IS EITHER WORKING FOR A RIVAL COMPANY... OR HIDING FROM THE ***POLICE...*** AND I'LL SOON HAVE ***PROOF*** FOR YOU!
IT'S TIME TO TEACH THAT DELLA A LESSON!
7


AND IF ANY HUMAN HAD THE POWER TO SEE THINGS THAT HUMAN EYES CANNOT SEE, ON THAT STARLIT NIGHT, HE WOULD HAVE SEEN THE FATEFUL FIGURE OF **VENUS**, GODDESS OF LOVE AND BEAUTY, OVERCOMING THE PUNY BARRIERS OF TIME AND SPACE TO HASTEN BACK TO THE PLANET EARTH !
AFTER REACHING EARTH, VENUS LOSES NO TIME IN MAKING A CERTAIN CALL!
I EXPECT TO SEE TWO **VERY SURPRISED** YOUNG MEN WHEN THIS DOOR IS OPENED!
WEED & STOUT
Private Detectives
KNOCK! KNOCK!
HELLO! WHAT? **YIPE!** IT'S **HER**!
MAY I COME IN?
FIRST I WANT TO TELL YOU TWO NOT TO WORRY ABOUT YOUR EYESIGHT! YOU WERE **NOT** SEEING THINGS! THE EYE DOCTOR WAS RIGHT!
H-HOW DO **YOU** KNOW ABOUT THE EYE DOCTOR?
D-DON'T COME ANY CLOSER! I DON'T KNOW WHO OR **WHAT** YOU ARE... BUT **STAY AWAY FROM US!**
YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO FEAR, GENTLEMEN! I JUST WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME...AND **THIS** IS WHAT IT IS!


AND, A LITTLE WHILE LATER, IN HAMMOND'S OFFICE...
I TELL YOU, MR. HAMMOND, MY DETECTIVES WILL BE BACK IN A FEW MINUTES WITH A FULL REPORT ON WHERE VENUS DISAPPEARS TO... AND WHY!
I'M NOT SO SURE I LIKE THE IDEA OF DETECTIVES FOLLOWING HER, DELLA! OH, PERHAPS THAT'S THEM NOW!
NOK!
NOK!
THESE ARE THE MEN I TOLD YOU ABOUT, MR. HAMMOND!
HERE WE ARE BACK AGAIN, MISS DELLA!
WE CAME TO RETURN YOUR $100, MISS DELLA, BECAUSE WE COULDN'T FIND ANY OTHER PUBLISHER WHO'D GIVE YOU A JOB IF YOU QUIT MR. HAMMOND!
SO...
WH...?
SO YOU REALLY SENT THESE TWO MEN OUT TO TRY TO FIND YOU A BETTER JOB, EH? SO YOU'RE NOT SATISFIED WORKING FOR ME, EH?
N-NO, MR. HAMMOND! HONEST, THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE... A BIG MISTAKE!
I'LL SAY THERE HAS... AND I MADE IT WHEN I HIRED YOU! NOW GET OUT! YOU'RE FIRED! YOU... WHAT'S THAT?
HA! HA! HA!
VENUS!
HA-HA! YOU CERTAINLY DID OUTSMART YOURSELF THAT TIME, DELLA!


DELLA IS INNOCENT, MR. HAMMOND! *I* TOLD THE DETECTIVES TO SAY WHAT THEY DID!
YOU DID? *WHY?*
JUST TO PROVE TO BOTH OF YOU THAT YOU CAN'T ALWAYS BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR ABOUT *ANYBODY!*
AND TO PROVE TO *DELLA* THAT SHE SHOULD STOP TRYING TO DISCREDIT ME... BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE IT... AND BECAUSE I AM *WELL ABLE TO DEFEND MYSELF!*
BESIDES, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ANYBODY TO BE SO CURIOUS ABOUT WHERE I AM WHEN YOU CAN'T FIND ME! I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE...I *VISIT THE PLANET VENUS!*
OH, NO! NOT *THAT* AGAIN!
COME, VENUS! LET'S GO TO A SHOW! I CAN'T STAND ANY MORE OF THIS CONFUSION! AND AS FOR *YOU,* DELLA, LET ME HEAR NO MORE ABOUT DETECTIVES!
SO LONG, DELLA! NEXT TIME, THINK TWICE BEFORE INCURRING THE WRATH OF A *GODDESS!*
I NEVER FIGGERED THAT WE'D EVER EARN $100 LIKE *THIS!*
HARDER! I DESERVE IT!
BAM!
THE END